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For Characters Levels 7–9

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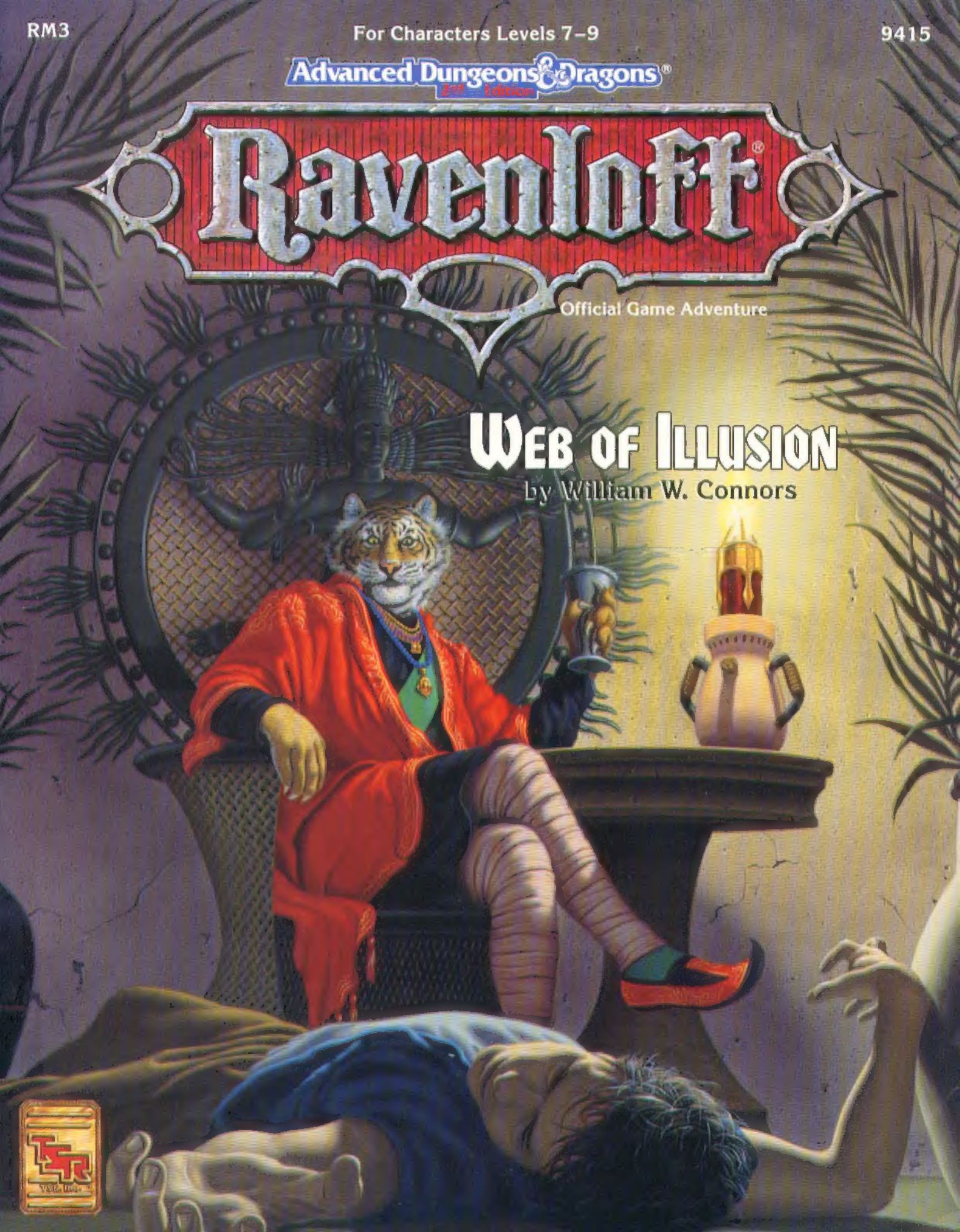
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® 2nd Edition

Ravenloft®

Official Game Adventure

Web of Illusion

by William W. Connors



WEB OF ILLUSION

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INTRODUCTION

eb of Illusion is an adventure set in the domain of Sri Raji, one of Ravenloft's much feared Islands of Terror. Over the course of this 64-page adventure, the player characters will step out of the mists into the heart of a tropical jungle, into the crowded city of Pakat, into the hushed halls of the Great University of Tvashsti, and at last into the temple of Mahakala at the heart of Bahru, the Accursed City. Here, as the dark goddess Kali watches, they must battle the dread Arijani and, if they hope to survive and return home, destroy him.

Background Information

Sri Raji is a land of tropical jungles, tigers, and reincarnation. It is based on a highly fictionalized India, and the reader is well-advised to bear in mind that the land presented here is in no way intended as an accurate representation or parody of the true India.

Portions of this adventure are drawn from information presented in the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 2nd Edition *Legends & Lore* section on Indian mythology. This section is highly recommended reading for anyone planning to run this adventure.

Secret Societies

Two of the major forces in this book, the Dark Sisters and the Stalkers, are examples of secret societies. Ravenloft is dotted with these mysterious groups, and there is almost certainly no domain that can claim to be free of these mysterious orders. A DUNGEON MASTER™ (DM™) who enjoys the sort of intrigue and mystery that these groups present will find the *Secret Societies* book in the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set most helpful.

Running This Adventure

In planning to run a RAVENLOFT® adventure, the DM is assuming a fairly hefty responsibility. The RAVENLOFT setting demands much more in terms of theatrics, pacing, and mood than any other role-playing game. Still, for those who can master the skills required to referee such an adventure, the rewards are more than worth it.

In every RAVENLOFT adventure, there is some element that needs to be given special consideration. If this one element is kept in mind, the DM can create an air of mystery and uniqueness about his adventure.

In *Web of Illusion* there are a number of things that the DM can use to play up the alien nature of the environment. When they are in towns, it is important that they be constantly reminded of their place as outsiders. No one will look at them, let alone attempt conversation with them. Wherever they go, the PCs should have the feeling that they are being watched and are surrounded by people who wouldn't raise a finger to help them if they were attacked.

In the wilds, the PCs need to feel hunted. The DM should make certain that they understand what sort of environment the wilds of Sri Raji represent. Tigers prowl the underbrush, poisonous snakes wait to strike at every turn, and carnivorous plants constantly hunger for a meal. Traveling in the jungles of this dread domain is not much safer than trying to steal a dragon's horde.

Wrapping Things Up

Web of Illusion is designed so that the players stand a good chance of destroying one of Ravenloft's dark lords. Several things can happen upon the death of such a person, and the DM will need to decide which is best for his campaign.

If the heroes succeed in killing Arijani, the domain of Sri Raji may well cease to exist. However, there is likely to be some black-hearted villain waiting in the wings, hoping for just such a chance.

DMs who wish to keep the place around should assume that the Dark Powers transfer rulership of the domain to another person. The DM will need to make changes to the domain, as it will now have to reflect the evils of its new master.

Fear and Horror Checks

At no point in this adventure is the DM instructed to make a fear or horror check (or a madness check, for those using the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set). These rules were inserted into the game to promote role-playing and, as such, will need to be used when and where the DM thinks it necessary.

If the players are good at acting their parts when scared, the DM will have no need of such artificial game aids. The DM should encourage the players to have their characters act in a manner that fits the situation at hand. Thus, fear, horror, and madness checks should be used only as a last resort.

Psionics

This adventure is written without any specific mention of the rules for psychic powers presented in the *Complete Psionics Handbook* or the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set. If one or more of the characters in the party is psionic, the DM will have to do a little bit of quick thinking in some places. However, the rules presented in *Forbidden Lore* should keep the task fairly manageable.

Now, let's step into the mists and see what awaits us in the *Web of Illusion*.

SPINNING THE WEB

This adventure has two major parts. The first of these details the events that follow the characters' arrival in Sri Raji. The second begins when the heroes reach Arijani's temple. It covers the exploration of that horrid place and the confrontation with the dark lord himself.

The first part of *Web of Illusion* is presented in a series of scenes, not unlike the outline of a book or motion picture. The second part of the adventure is written in a more traditional "dungeon delving" style.

Ideally, the DM will take the time to read the entire adventure through carefully before attempting to referee the adventure. The format of this section, however, makes it somewhat easier for the DM to administer during the course of the game with a minimum of preparation time.

All of the scenes in this section are comprised of several elements. Each of these presents a certain type of information. Taken as a whole, they provide all the information that the DM will need to adjudicate that portion of the adventure. The following text describes the various elements and their purpose.

Overview

This section of the scene provides the Dungeon Master with a quick description of the events that are about to occur. It will generally provide enough information for the DM to quickly visualize the upcoming scene and anticipate any unusual actions that players might take.

Preparation

This portion explains to the Dungeon Master exactly what steps must be taken to get the scene started. For instance, it might list the types of monsters that are encountered so that the DM could have their *Monstrous Compendium*™ sheets handy. Further, it might provide a series of conditions that the DM must be sure are met before the encounter can proceed. The first scene of the adventure, for example, can only begin when the player characters are deep in a jungle or thick forest, so the DM must somehow ensure that the PCs have entered such an area.

In many cases, it is possible to reach a specific scene in several ways. When this is so, the preparation section will point out the most probable variants and offer advice on how to resolve the encounter in these cases.

Narrative

Each scene opens with some boxed text that can be used to introduce the players to their characters' situation. Depending on the theatrical preferences of the DM and the players, this can be either read as is, condensed and paraphrased, or expanded upon.

Additional bits of boxed text may follow later in the scene to describe unusual events that come about because of the actions of the players or during the course of the adventures.

Resolution

This is the heart of the scene. In this section, the Dungeon Master is given all the details that are needed to run this portion of the adventure. Complete descriptions of the monsters encountered, the goals of NPCs, and the like will be found in this section.

While there is a single direction that every scene is expected to take, the players certainly have the ability to divert the adventure from its designed course. Enough information is provided in this section of the adventure to ensure that the DM can cope with even the most unusual turn of events.

Theatrics

This portion of the text is included to give the Dungeon Master an idea of the mood that each scene is supposed to convey. Scenes that are mostly combat oriented, for instance, will generally need fast-paced staging, with little time for player discussion and debate. Other parts of the adventure might be more leisurely.

Tips on presenting the encounter might include important elements of the background to emphasize or key phrases and clues that must not be missed.

Background

While the previous section describes everything that the Dungeon Master needs to know in order to administer the scene, this section provides background information that may prove useful. It might include subtle information about an NPC's true motives and long-range goals, the history of certain objects, or past events that the DM might wish to introduce into the adventure at a later time.

Aftermath

After the players have completed the scene, this section gives the Dungeon Master the information needed to determine what happens next.

Scene 1: Dark Arrivals

Overview

In this scene, the player characters are transported to Ravenloft from their home land. If they are already in the Demiplane of Dread, this scene serves to usher them into the domain of Sri Raji.

Preparation

In order for this adventure to begin, the Dungeon Master must bring the player characters into a thick forest or jungle. Any excuse to get the party into this environment will do. However, the business that brings them into the woods shouldn't be something so pressing that it distracts them from the adventure ahead. A brief excursion, like a hunt or safari, works better.

Narrative

As you move through the forest, you come upon a small clearing. Stepping into it, you feel a cool breeze that rustles the leaves and stirs the underbrush. The air around you is filled with the sweet smell of loam and the delicate melodies of songbirds.

With some surprise, you notice that the breeze has become stronger. It quickly builds into a gale, causing the branches around you to lash out as if they were alive. Dried leaves and twigs are swept into the air, momentarily blinding you. The rush of air howls like a lion, and a wave of stifling heat rolls over you.

Then, as quickly as it began, the mysterious gust of wind passes. All is deathly quiet and still. The coolness of the forest is gone, replaced by an oppressive heat and humidity that quickly coats your body in sweat.

Resolution

As the characters look around, they will find that more than the temperature has changed. The forest has now become a lush, tropical jungle. Brightly colored flowers, many of them highly poisonous, decorate the trees and the underbrush. The discreet songs of the forest birds have been supplanted by the ringing cries of parrots and macaws. In the distance, the howls and whoops of countless jungle animals cut through the air.

Theatrics

Getting an adventure started is sometimes a tricky thing. This is especially true with a RAVENLOFT® scenario, because these often begin with the player characters outside of the Demiplane of Dread. The first step in these games is to bring the heroes into Ravenloft. If this is not done carefully, it can appear to be artificial and detract from the establishment of a smooth start to the game. If done correctly, this transference can serve to plant the first seeds of uncertainty that will, with a bit of effort, produce a bountiful harvest of terror later on.

Background

The player characters have been transported to Ravenloft and now stand in the domain of Sri Raji. They have arrived in the jungle just west of the Bahkuku River south of Pakat. For ease of reference, this position is marked with an "H" on the domain section of the poster map.

Aftermath

This scene simply serves to get things started. Once it is completed, the Dungeon Master can move on to Scene 2.

Scene 2: The Tiger's Gaze

Overview

In this scene, the characters are introduced to the hazards of Sri Raji. As they contemplate the events in Scene One, they find themselves tangentially drawn into the conflict between the followers of Ravana and the cult of Kali.

Preparation

The DM should give the players a few seconds to discuss what has happened to them. It may be that some of them will suspect that they are in Ravenloft; that's fine. A good DM will neither confirm nor deny that this is the case.

In any event, the PCs will be distracted from their discussion and planning by a crashing in the underbrush. The jungle is too thick to see its source, but the sound is clearly coming toward the characters.

Narrative

Suddenly, a running woman bursts from the jungle to the east. She is slightly built, dark-skinned, and dressed in fine clothes that have been torn and tattered by her seemingly mindless dash through the foliage. She clutches a bundle of cloth in her hands and blood runs from a series of parallel slashes on his face. Her eyes are opened wide in terror.

Whatever is chasing her is close behind and tearing through the jungle at a fantastic speed.

Resolution

The woman, named Tega, is being chased by a fierce tiger. Seconds after she darts into the clearing with the player characters, the beast bursts from the undergrowth and pounces on her. The impact sends her crashing to the ground, breaking her neck and sending the package tumbling through the air. Recognizing that it has killed its prey, the creature turns its attention to the others in the clearing. Without pause it springs to attack the nearest member of the group.

The creature that now confronts the party is not a true tiger. It is a weretiger and a member of the Stalkers. The beast conforms to the statistics presented in the *Monstrous Compendium*™, save that it is evil.

Weretiger (1): AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6+2; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d12; SA rake 1d4+1/1d4+1; SD silver or +1 or better to hit; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975; Treasure Nil.

If the beast is killed, its true nature will be revealed as it transforms back into the shape of a dead man. In human form, the weretiger will be seen as a powerfully built man in his early twenties. He is dark-complected and bears a colorful tatoo of a roaring tiger on his back. He wears no clothing and has no possessions that might serve to identify him.

This fight is intended to put a good scare into the PCs. If the weretiger is not going to pose a major threat to them, the DM is free to introduce a few tigers that follow the lycanthrope and obey its orders. One or more of these creatures springing from the jungle to land upon unsuspecting heroes should be more than enough to introduce a bit of healthy fear. (This addition should also teach the players a quick lesson in respect for the more mundane inhabitants of Sri Raji's jungles. As horrible as many of Ravenloft's monsters may be, some of its more common animals can be even worse.)

Tiger (varies): AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d10; SA rear claws 2d4/2d4; SD Surprised only on a 1; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 10; XP 650; Treasure Nil.

Theatrics

The key to this scene is pacing. Everything needs to move fast and furious to capture the tension, drama, and excitement of combat. The DM

shouldn't give the players any time to talk amongst themselves during this scene. Rather, he should just turn to the first player and request an action, then turn to the second, and so on. If any player takes more than a few seconds to answer, the DM should just move on and assume that the character in question is too stunned to take any action.

This sort of thing is not strictly according to the rules governing surprise. However, it does a fine job of capturing the drama and need for quick thinking in a crisis situation.

Background

Tega is (was!) a priestess of Kali. The object that was knocked from her grasp is a fairly valuable ceramic figure of a tiger. It is wrapped in many layers of cloth, making it fairly bulky but also providing good protection for the figurine.

It was once *Ravana's Bane*, the silver crossbow bolt that was used by Arijani to destroy his father's avatar many decades ago. Because this weapon has the potential to destroy him, Arijani spent several years searching for it after Sri Raji entered Ravenloft. When no trace of the item was found, he assumed that it was either destroyed or left behind when the lands around his temple were captured by the Demiplane of Dread.

Recently, the weapon turned up in Tvashsti, where an elderly man named Sidrathi, one of the historians at the Great University, discovered its history. Fearful of the power that the thing represented, he sought to destroy the object. When he found that this was impossible, he decided to camouflage it. First, he melted down the weapon. When this was done, he cast it in the shape of a tiger. Finally, he encased it in a porcelain shell so that none would be able to tell that it was once silver.

Tega was one of the scholar's assistants and secretly a member of the Dark Sisters. She stumbled upon the treasure that Sidrathi had found and learned what he had done. In an effort to prevent the Stalkers from learning that *Ravana's Bane* had resurfaced, she stole the figurine. It wasn't long before her actions came to the attention of Arijani's enemies and Tega was forced to flee into the jungles. She headed west, hoping to find refuge in Pakat and then to complete her journey to Mahakala, Arijani's temple on the slopes of Mount Yamatali.

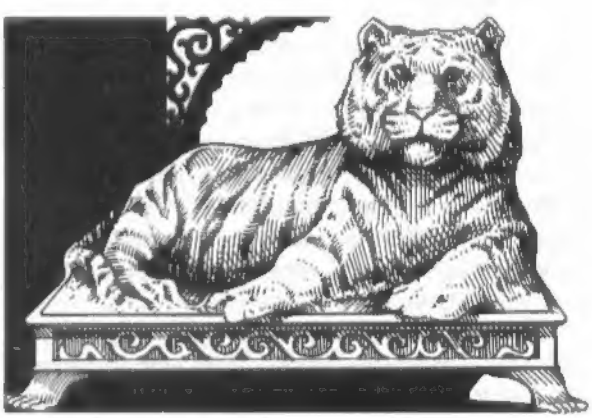
Just south of the city, the Stalkers caught up with her. While they didn't know exactly what she was carrying, they suspected it to be of great importance to their enemy. They are now determined to possess it for themselves. It is at this point that the events described in this scene take place.

Aftermath

This fight ought to end with the PCs beaten up a little bit, but still victorious. If they seem to be losing the battle, the DM is free to engineer the desired outcome.

When the PCs have done what they can to patch themselves up and recover the package, they will certainly want to move on. In order to prompt this, the DM can raise the possibility of other creatures lurking in the wilderness or another attack by the tigers.

Because of their location, they can't really help but run into the mists at the edge of the domain or the rice paddies that surround Pakat. If they enter the mists, they will find themselves transported into the rice paddies anyway. Thus, the party will always move from here to Scene 3 and their first encounter with one of Sri Raji's crowded cities.



Scene 3: Amid Strangers

Overview

In this scene, the heroes enter the city of Pakat. Because they are obviously outsiders, they quickly become the center of attention as they move through the town. It isn't long before the arrival of strangers comes to the attention of the Stalkers and the Dark Sisters—and a young girl.

Preparation

The DM will want to have the city map of Pakat and the **Encounter Reaction** tables in the *Dungeon Master™ Guide* or on the *Dungeon Master Screen* close at hand during this adventure.

Narrative

You have entered a small, crowded city. The streets are narrow and filled with slightly-built people moving to and fro about their affairs. Wherever you move, people take care to keep away from you. No one speaks to you and everyone takes great care to avoid giving you more than a passing glance.

Resolution

Because outsiders pose a threat to Arijani, the Dark Sisters are constantly on the look-out for them. As soon as they discover intruders in the domain, they hunt them down and destroy them. When possible, they capture them and take them to Mahakala to satisfy their master's endless hunger. Anyone who is known or suspected of aiding an outsider will generally share the fate of those they have befriended.

Because of this, every attempt that the player characters make to communicate with the locals in a public place will meet with failure. There are two main reasons for this. The first is simply that the language of Sri Raji is unlike that spoken anywhere else. The second, however, is that outsiders are greatly feared and mistrusted. Even if magical means are used to allow conversation, the natives will refuse to speak and quickly get away from the party.

If the players are able to get someone alone, they may be able to get some response other than studied avoidance. If this is the case, the **Encounter Reactions** table can be used to determine what response the individual has to the party.

Theatrics

This is a slower-paced scene. It provides the DM with a chance to show that the characters are unwelcome intruders here. All of the locals are terrified of being associated with the heroes and the DM should really play this up.

Background

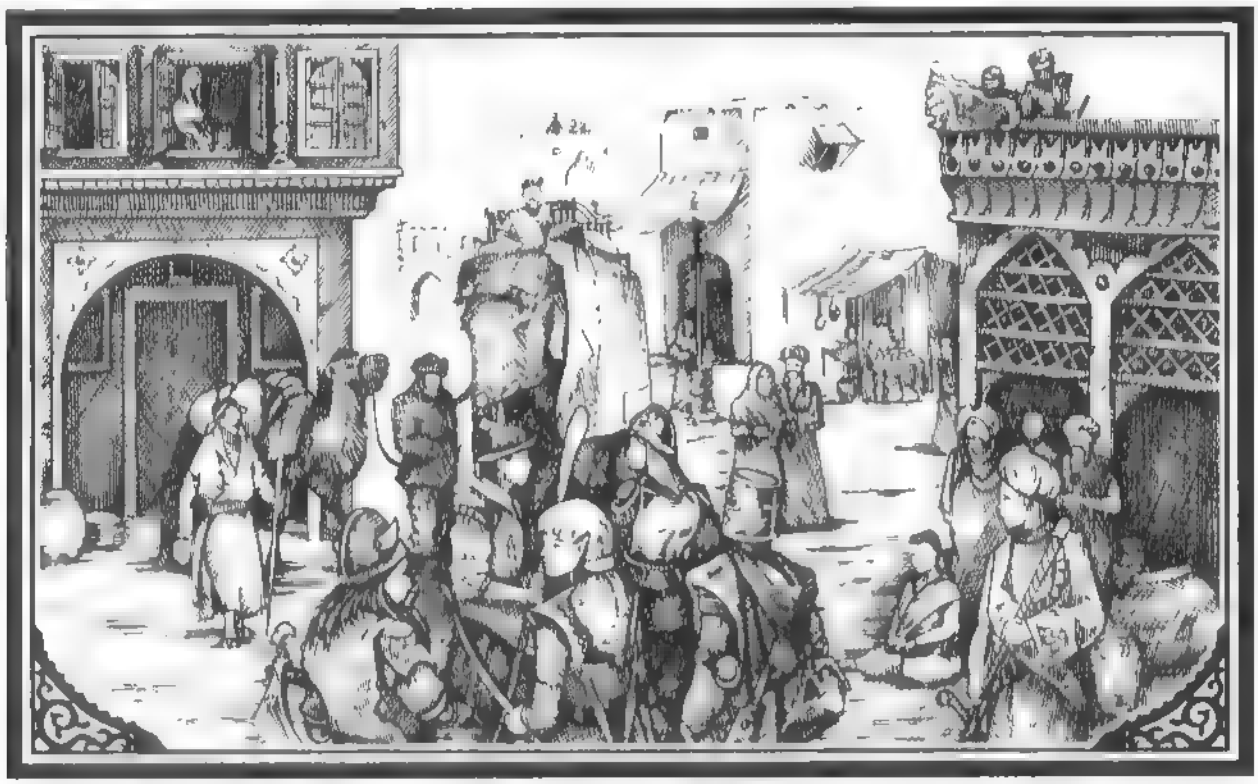
As has been said, the locals are scared of both the heroes and the attention that will soon surround them. There isn't much other background information needed for this scene.

Aftermath

If the players have managed to get their characters alone with one of the natives and have made some attempt at communication, the result that they draw from the **Encounter Reactions** table will determine what happens next in the adventure.

Friendly responses will result in the PCs being introduced to Minja. The events of this meeting are described in Scene 4.

An **indifferent** or **cautious** response on the part of the locals will mean that they have been ignored. While the locals will not turn them in to Dark Sisters, they will take no action to aid them. If this is the case, the adventure continues with Scene 5 as the PCs come to the attention of the Stalkers.



A **threatening, hostile,** or **flight** result indicates that the native is frightened of the outsiders. He will do whatever he can to escape from them, even attacking them if he has no clear route of flight. Once free, the person they made contact with will turn them over to the Dark Sisters. If the person is prevented from escaping, his friends and family will discover what has happened to him and alert the Dark Sisters. Either of these unfortunate circumstances is detailed in Scene 6.

If the PCs don't take any action that draws undue attention to themselves, they'll be located and contacted by the Stalkers. These events are depicted in Scene 5.

If they display the figurine openly or are fairly public in their coming and going, they will come to the attention of the Dark Sisters. This encounter is dealt with in Scene 6.

Scene 4: Minja

Overview

In this scene, the heroes are introduced to Minja, a young girl whose parents came to Sri Raji from the land that the player characters themselves call home. She has lived in Sri Raji for many years and can act as a translator for the heroes.

Preparation

There are many ways in which the PCs might come to meet Minja. The most likely is that they will be introduced to her by a local who has decided to trust them (see Scene 3). The DM might also arrange for them to encounter her on their own to facilitate play of the adventure and get things moving.

Whatever the circumstances of their meeting, the following scene can be used to provide a first impression of Minja. The narrative assumes that the PCs are being introduced to her by a third party that has led them to Minja and does not speak their language.

Narrative

With nervous steps, the native leads you through narrow streets and to a small adobe-and-thatch hut at the end of a dirty, foul-smelling alley. He knocks sharply on the door and rushes in quickly when it opens, motioning for you to follow.

Inside, you find yourselves standing in a dimly-lit, claustrophobic home. An elderly couple sits at a small table, working with fine picks and probes to carve delicate images in pieces of ivory. The couple looks up, worn faces looking like dark, wrinkled leather; they take no other notice of your entrance.

As your eyes begin to adjust, a slender woman steps forward from behind the door. She is dressed in a simple, hooded robe with a decorative ceramic mask fitted over her face. Looking you up and down, she nods to your guide. With a quick tilt of his head, he turns and heads back up the street.

After he leaves, the woman draws back her hood to reveal short-cropped, sandy hair. She slips the mask off, revealing herself to be both pretty and no more a native of this land than you are.

"Welcome to our home," she says in a soft, heavily accented voice.

Resolution

This is a "getting to know you" scene in which the player characters can learn about the domain of Sri Raji from Minja. She will be honest and straightforward in answering their questions about the land and her own history. The following is a list of probable questions and her answers to them:

Q. Where are we?
A. You are in the city of Pakat, the jewel of Sri Raji

Q. How did we get here?
A I do not know. From time to time, outsiders wander into our land from distant places Sometimes I can speak with them and help them to find their way home, sometimes I cannot.

Q. What can you tell us about this figurine?
A. I have never seen its like before. No doubt the scholars at the Great University in Tvashsti could provide you with more information about it

Q. Do you know anything about the weretiger that attacked us?
A. I have heard stories of an outsider who came to Sri Raji many years ago. It is said that he could transform himself into the shape of a great tiger. I believe that he lives in the wilderness somewhere between here and Tvashsti, but none can say if that is true or not.

Q. What can you tell us about the girl we saw in the jungle?
A. From your description, I should say that she was a follower of Kali. Perhaps she was even a priestess of the Dark Sisters.

Q. Who rules this place?
A. Our lord is Arijani, High Priest of Kali. He lives in a great temple on the slopes of Mount Yamatali. I have never seen him, but I have heard that he is very handsome and wise.

Questions about Minja's past will be answered honestly, although she will not be quick to discuss the matter at length. As far as she is concerned, her life outside of Sri Raji is unimportant. She doesn't remember her natural parents very well and has no interest in returning to the land where she was born.

Minja can also provide a good deal of description about Sri Raji, its geography, and its people. It is important to remember that, like most of the domain's natives, she is quite happy in her daily life. Thus, she will not speak of terrors in the night or other gloomy subjects. Rather, she will talk about the beauty of the jungle flowers and the long traditions of honor and piety that motivate her people.

Theatrics

Minja is a trusting and trustworthy person. The DM will want to keep this in mind when role-playing her. Because she only has a child's command of her native language, the DM will want to use simple words when presenting her dialogue. In addition, her speech is heavily accented, so the DM will want to do his best foreign language impression.

Again, the DM is reminded that Minja loves her life in Sri Raji and will always attempt to take even the most unfortunate happening in the best light.

Background

The young girl's name is Minja. She has lived most of her life in Sri Raji but still remembers her native land from childhood.

Minja's parents were merchants who travelled through the lands where the player characters make their homes. One night, a terrific storm swept across their campsite. Throughout the night, a seeming endless cascade of water battered their wagons and a ceaseless cacophony of thunder made conversation impossible

The next morning, when they awoke from a night of fitful sleep, the storm had passed on. To their surprise, they found that they were now in a mysterious land inhabited by a strange people. They began to explore and entered the city of Muladi.

Like the PCs, they were clearly outsiders and not welcomed by the locals. It was not long before they drew the attention of the Dark Sisters to themselves. Although they tried to escape the minions of Arijani, his network of spies and informants found them. In an effort to escape their fate, Minja's parents boarded a boat and headed down the Vedama River, hoping to escape into the mists east of the city.

Before they reached their ethereal destination, sheets of fire fell from the sky, utterly destroying their boat. Word that the outsiders had offended the gods and been destroyed for their evil ways spread quickly throughout Muladi.

Amidst the mysterious events of that night, many other events were lost. Among these was the fact that a young farmer named Zind and his beloved Alissa wept over the body of their young daughter, Kandina. The poor girl had been mauled by a tiger in the jungles north of the city and died in her mother's arms. The next day, as Zind was committing the child's body to the depths of Lake Veda, he found a young girl clinging to a fragment of the incinerated boat. He took this as a gift from the gods to replace the child that had been taken from him. Taking the traumatized girl home, he and Alissa raised her as their own.

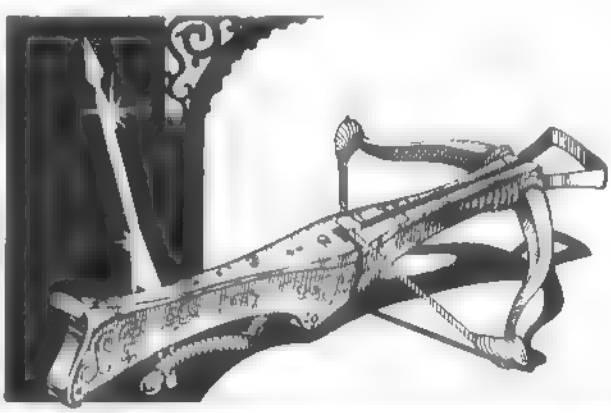
In order to protect their adopted daughter, the couple left behind their lives in Muladi and headed west, settling in Pakat. In order to keep the girl's true nature secret, they fashioned a mask for her. They told people that their daughter had been attacked by a tiger and horribly mauled. The mask, they said, was simply a cover for the horrible scars that were left by the attack. While many people have learned over the years that Minja was something other than she appeared, her parents were so kind and loved by those around them that none who have learned her secret have revealed it.

In Pakat, Zind set aside his past career as a farmer and became a craftsman. With diligence and time, Minja's father became a skilled and respected artisan whose work in ivory and jade brought him fame and a fair degree of wealth.

Aftermath

It is very likely that Minja will join the heroes at the end of this scene and travel with them as they explore Sri Raji. The Dungeon Master will want to keep her in the background unless the players have a specific need for her skills as a translator and native guide. A complete description of Minja is provided in the NPC appendix at the back of this book

The next step in the adventure depends upon the actions of the players. If they begin to research the ceramic figure with Minja's help, go to Scene 7. If they try to learn more about the weretiger that they fought in the jungle, go to Scene 5. If they investigate the woman that they saw killed, they will come to the attention of the Dark Sisters and go to Scene 6.



Scene 5: The Tiger's Den

Overview

In this scene, the characters are located by the Stalkers as they investigate the city of Pakat or the weretiger that attacked them in the jungle They are assumed to have the figure with them. They may or may not have Minja with them to act as a guide and translator.

Preparation

Because of the many ways in which this encounter can be set up, there is some advance planning required of the Dungeon Master. The DM will need to decide exactly where the encounter will occur and what safeguards the Stalkers have taken to prevent the escape of the PCs.

The narrative that follows assumes that the encounter will take place in some public location, as that is the way the Stalkers would prefer to engineer it. Once all of these considerations have been taken into account, the DM can begin the scene with the narrative that follows.

Narrative

As you move through the streets, everyone you pass looks away. No one makes eye contact with you and every attempt you make to draw the attention of a passer-by is met with studied disregard. Thus, it comes as quite a surprise when a young man steps in front of you and raises a hand, signalling you to halt. Although he is not a large man, his slender body is well muscled and he has the stern eyes of a predator. When he smiles, you notice that there is more malice in the expression than friendship.

Resolution

The Stalkers are well aware that outsiders pose a great threat to Arijani and are, thus, greatly hated by the Dark Sisters. They will do what they can to make this encounter with the player character amicable.

The young man's name is Kahleed. Like all of the Stalkers, he is a weretiger. He is one of Jahed's chief lieutenants in that mysterious order and is one of the most intelligent men in the domain of Sri Raji.

If Minja is with the party, she will be able to translate for them and normal conversation can be made. If not, the PCs will have to provide some manner of magical communication or make due with rudimentary signs and gestures. Because the man's only job is to convince them to follow him to a meeting with Jahed, it is probable that this can be done without spoken exchanges.

In order to get the PCs to come with him, Kahleed will attempt to be as friendly and persuasive as he can. If he is unable to converse with the party, he will bring forth a bag of gold coins (100 gp), run the money out into his hand, dump it back in the bag, and toss it to the nearest PC. He will then hold up a second such pouch and start to walk away, motioning for the heroes to follow him.

If verbal communication is possible, either through Minja or via a magical spell, Kahleed will simply say that he represents someone who can help the characters. He will point out that there are many enemies in the streets of Pakat and that they risk their lives by remaining in the open.

Theatrics

Although the DM will want to play up the mysterious side of this encounter, he should bear in mind the fact that Kahleed and the Stalkers want everything to go over peacefully. They recognize the importance of outsiders in their battle against Arijani and are willing to go to some inconvenience to see to it that things are handled smoothly.

Jahed knows of the existence of *Ravana's Bane*, but he has no idea that it has been recast as a figurine. He knows that it is of some importance to the Dark Sisters and will attempt to keep it from falling into their hands.

Background

Jahed, the leader and founder of the Stalkers, is waiting for the characters in a warehouse several blocks away. He has sent one of his most trusted men to meet them and bring them to him. It is his desire to enlist their aid and send them to strike down the lord of Sri Raji

Aftermath

If the PCs agree to follow Kahleed, they will be taken to meet with Jahed. The events of that meeting are described in Scene 8.

If the PCs refuse to help Jahed, he will order his followers to attack them. This conflict is resolved in Scene 9

Scene 6: The Eyes of Kali

Overview

This scene handles the discovery of the party by the Dark Sisters while they are in the city of Pakat. It is an ambush in which the characters are forced to fight for their lives. The Dark Sisters desire only to destroy the outsiders who may pose a threat to their master, Arijani.

It is possible to use this scene to resolve encounters with the Dark Sisters in places like the jungles around Pakat. If this is the case, the DM will have to take some liberties with the information presented here.

Preparation

In order to begin this scene, the DM will need to maneuver the PCs into some public place like a market or open courtyard. If the PCs are hesitant about exposing themselves so openly, the scene can easily be staged in a more private place.

Narrative

Gradually, you come to notice that the press of people around your party has lessened. It is with some surprise that you find yourselves standing at the center of an open circle some thirty feet in diameter. The eyes of the locals, which have consistently avoided looking your way, are now clearly focused on you with an expectant look.

As you watch, a small party of women steps into the open area from the crowd. They are all dressed alike, in flowing black robes with silver skull clasps running down the front. Their faces are painted black and white, giving you the distinct impression that you face some manner of grinning undead.

As they move forward, you see that each of them is carrying a long chain that ends in a cast-iron skull. Without warning, two of them begin to whirl the skulls above their heads. With each revolution, the oddly manufactured objects give off a mournful wailing sound that chills the marrow in your bones.

Resolution

The Dark Sisters have no interest in taking the PCs prisoner or in negotiating with them. They seek only to destroy them.

The exact number of women in the group is left to the imagination of the DM. The important thing to remember is that this fight must be very serious and deadly. The DM should stack the odds against the players so that the Stalkers can charge to the rescue.

One woman in the group is a spellcasting priestess, the others are rogues who serve the Dark Sisters as assassins. Again, the number of assassins is left in the hands of the DM, but one per party member is not unreasonable. No matter how many assassins are present, there will be only one priestess.

8th-level Priestess of Kali: AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 8; hp 50; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1; SA spells, move silently (62%), hide in shadows (49%); SD spells; SZ M; ML Elite (14-15); XP 800; Treasure Nil; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 16.
Spells: *cure light wounds* (×2), *cause light wounds* (×2), *command*; *hold person* (×2), *slow poison, chant, spiritual hammer*; *cause blindness or deafness, cause disease, feign death*; *cure serious wounds, cause serious wounds, cloak of fear*

5th-level Dark Sister Assassin: AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1; SA thief abilities; SD thief abilities; SZ M; ML Elite (14-15); XP 500; Treasure Nil; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13.
Thief Skills: PP 65%; OL 62%; F/RT 50%; MS 55%; HS 46%; HN 20%; CW 90%; KL 25%.

The fight begins with the assassins striking with their flails. At the same time, the priestess will use her spells, primarily *cause blindness or deafness* and *hold person*, to weaken or disable the enemies of Arijani. These women are deadly opponents who have set this ambush up so that everything is to their advantage

The crowd's fear of the PCs will cause them to do things like tripping characters who get near them or throwing stones into the fray. Any PC that lashes out at these innocents with intent to seriously injure or kill them will have to make a Dark Powers check. The chance of failure on such a test is equal to 1% per point of damage inflicted to the innocent.

If the fight begins to go against the Dark Sisters, the DM should take steps to turn it back around. This might include the sudden arrival of more assassins or some support from rooftop archers acting as snipers. It is important that the Stalkers have the chance to join in the fray and save the PCs.

If the heroes are actually able to thwart the ambush, the Dark Sisters will break off the attack and attempt to flee. The priestess will cover their escape by casting a *cloak of fear* around herself while the assassins simply vanish into the crowds. Because of the PCs lack of familiarity with the city and its streets, the Dark Sisters will have no problem at all in escaping from them

Any Dark Sisters that are certain to be captured will use poison pills to prevent themselves from being interrogated by the enemy. Each assassin has three of these small tablets hidden on her person. The Sisters are not against using these to kill the PCs if the opportunity arises. These pills are standard, type J, ingested poisons, with an onset time of 1-4 minutes; they are lethal to anyone who fails a saving throw versus poison. Those who save against the poison still suffer 20 points of damage. The Dark Sisters get no saving throws when taking these poison pills.

Should the PCs actually succeed in driving off the assassins, the DM will still need to introduce the Stalkers. This is simple enough to do, as they can simply arrive to hurry the heroes off the streets and protect them from another attack by the Dark Sisters. If Minja is not with them or if they have no other way of attaining verbal communication, it may be difficult for the Stalkers to get this idea across. If the players are reluctant to have their characters follow the Stalkers, the DM is free to spring another ambush by a second squad of Dark Sister assassins. This ought to get them moving, especially if the first fight left them battered and worn.

Theatrics

The fighting style of these women is highly stylized, resembling a complex dance. In less dangerous situations, this technique might even be considered alluring or theatrical. The DM will want to play up the macabre nature of this fighting style and the frightening sounds made by their flails in combat.

When the Stalkers join the battle, the DM will want to make it difficult for the PCs to know just whose side the newcomers are on. In the confusion of mass combat there is little chance for someone to stop and say, "Don't worry, we're here to save you."

Background

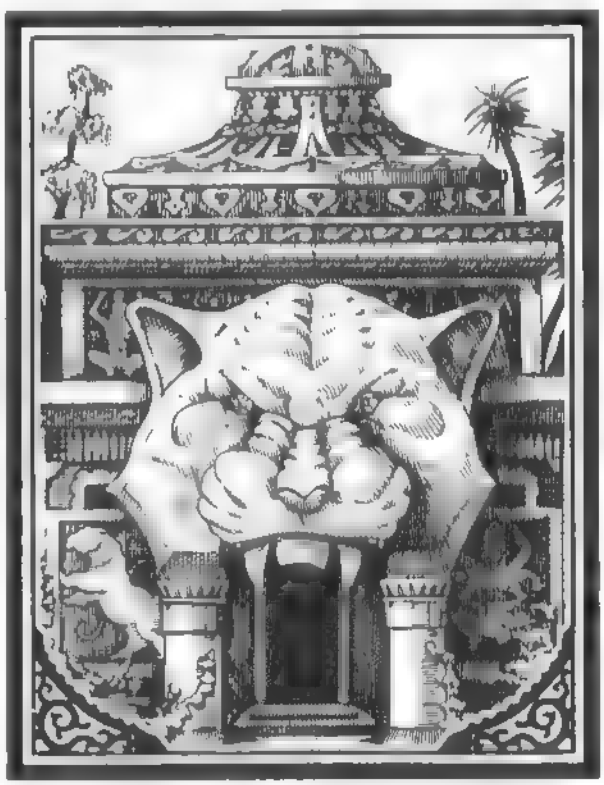
The Dark Sisters begin this encounter with no interest at all in the reasons that the PCs have come to Pakat nor what they have brought with them. They know that one of their number is bringing an important figurine to the city and will recognize it if they see it. Should this happen, they will take no special action to recover it during the fight. Instead, they simply plan to remove it from the corpses of the adventurers when they finish with them. The arrival of the Stalkers puts an end to that.

Aftermath

About the only way out of this scene for the PCs is to join with the Stalkers and flee from the Dark Sisters. If they do this, they are taken to meet with Jahed, the leader of the lycanthropes. The details of this meeting are dealt with in Scene 8.

If the PCs refuse to follow the lead of the Stalkers, or if they simply attempt to destroy them, they will find themselves in the midst of another deadly combat. In this case, it will be against the weretigers and can be resolved as Scene 9.

It is possible that the PCs might elude the Stalkers and the Dark Sisters, finding themselves wandering the streets of Pakat again. If this happens, the DM can flip back to Scene 3 and use the events described there as a guideline for what happens next. The exact events will have to be changed to prevent the players from becoming mired in *deja vu*, but it shouldn't be too hard to place them right back in the heat of things.



Scene 7: Searching for Answers

Overview

In this scene, the player characters are beginning to research the ceramic figure with the help of Minja. The young girl advises them to undertake the journey to Tvashsti, where they can meet with scholars at the Great University. This is a wilderness scene that occurs during their travels.

Preparation

The only thing that needs to happen before this scene can take place is for the heroes to set out on the road for Tvashsti. It is most likely that they will have Minja with them. If they don't, she can easily be added to the party by simply assuming that she follows them out of Pakat. After all, they are clearly from the same land that she is and her curiosity could easily lead her to such an action.

Narrative

The dense jungle seems to close in on the worn road like some constricting snake attempting to crush its victim. The air is thick with the smells of plants and heavy with humidity. Pockets of mist drift to and fro between the plants that line the road, moving almost as if they were living creatures.

Between the heat and the humidity, every step along this road seems to be an effort of enormous proportion. The chirping of insects blends with the roars of distant cats and the cries of a myriad of birds to form an almost hypnotic melody. The song of the jungle seems to be doing an excellent job of dragging you down into slumber.

Resolution

The fatigue and weariness is being introduced by a form of carnivorous plant unique to the jungles of Sri Raji. This horrible life form, known as a nightmare tree, is similar to the quickwood described in the RAVENLOFT® *Monstrous Compendium*™, save that it emits a cloud of fatiguing vapors and resembles a jungle plant, not a temperate one. Sensing the party of adventurers moving down the trail, the plant has decided to make a meal of them.

Nightmare Tree (1): AL N; AC 5; MV 1 (3 for roots); HD 10; hp 75; THAC0 11; #AT 1d6+12 roots and 1 mouth; Dmg nil (roots) and 3d4 (mouth); SA fatigue vapors; SD see below; MR special; SZ L; ML Champion (15-16); XP Variable; Treasure Z

When hunting, the nightmare tree emits a cloud of odorless, colorless vapor that causes all those within a 50-foot radius to save versus poison or become fatigued. Those affected by the toxin suffer a –2 on all ability checks, attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. Any form of magic designed to retard the effects of a poison in any way will eliminate the effects of the vapor, but the victim will have to save again on the next round unless he is removed from the area of effect

The nightmare tree does not have the spell channelling ability of the quickwood, but is otherwise just like its temperate cousin. It uses its roots (20 hp each) to drag victims into its maw, which then clamps down on them for 3d4 points of damage. The plant is immune to fire, lightning, poisons, and all manner of mind-affecting spells.

Once the plant is defeated, the PCs are able to continue on with their journey to Tvashsti. The rest of the trip will be uneventful.

If the PCs have somehow managed to lose the figurine before this point in the adventure, the battle with the nightmare tree is a good chance for the DM to return it to them. If this is the case, the PCs will simply come upon the half-eaten body of a Dark Sister near the tree. She was transporting the package to Arijani's temple, but was intercepted and slain by the plant.

Theatrics

This is a good chance for the DM to play up the nature of the jungle and the unusual creatures that live there. A few "red herring" encounters (skulking movements in the underbrush, dark shapes darting among the treetops, or the sounds of distant animals stalking and hunting) will only serve to heighten the tension before the sudden attack of the nightmare tree.

It is important to remember that an animated plant like this can be made quite dramatic and exciting because of its unusual nature. People have long come to expect that plants will just sit there no matter what you do to them. Careful role-playing of this monster by the DM can give this scene a unique flavor of horror and mystery.

Background

The jungles of Sri Raji are filled with dangerous predators. Most of them are animals, like the deadly tigers and venomous snakes, that lurk everywhere. Some few are more unusual than that. The nightmare tree and other carnivorous plants are found scattered throughout the domain.

Aftermath

When the PCs overcome this obstacle and reach Tvashsti, they can go at once to the Great University. Their experiences there are detailed in Scene 10.

Scene 8: Jahed's Plan

Overview

This scene depicts the meeting between the player characters and Jahed, the leader of the Stalkers. During this discussion, Jahed explains to them that he wishes them to seek out and destroy Arijani. In order to force them to agree to his plan, he has them infected with lycanthropy If they wish to be cured, they will do as he wishes. If they fail, they will be transformed into weretigers.

Preparation

Getting the PCs into this scene requires that they have done something to attract the attention of the Stalkers. There are many places in the adventure that will refer the DM to this section, each of which provides a different flavor to the encounter. Thus, it is equally possible that the PCs will come to this scene freely or that they will be led here in chains.

It is possible that the PCs' actions cause them to circumvent this encounter. In this case, the DM needs to stage events so that the PCs stumble upon this encounter by accident. For example, the DM can have them enter some room to find that Jahed is waiting for them.

Narrative

You find yourself looking into a shadowy room lit by a six-pronged candelabra with blood-red tapers burning on it. A long table covered with a black velvet cloth spreads out beneath the candelabra.

Six men, all powerfully built and wearing simple, grey robes, are seated along the sides of the table. On the table before each man rests a fine silver goblet. The light of the candles dances off the goblets' gleaming surfaces.

At the head of the table, an even more impressive man stands as if addressing the others. His eyes are cold and penetrating beneath a rugged mop of fiery orange hair. His gaze seems to paralyze you for a moment as he instantly sizes you up.

Your arrival has brought an end to whatever conversation was transpiring here. You now have the absolute and undivided attention of seven of the most dangerous-looking men you have ever seen.

Resolution

The large man at the head of the table is Jahed, the leader of the Stalkers. He has but one purpose in his life, the destruction of Arijani. He has no knowledge of Sri Raji's true nature nor any idea that it is part of the Demiplane of Dread. He does know that travelers sometimes find themselves drawn into Sri Raji against their will and will seek to exploit that knowledge in his dealings with the PCs. More complete information on Jahed can be found in the NPC section at the end of this book.

Jahed will move quickly to the matter at hand. He neither welcomes the characters nor takes any action to make them feel threatened. With almost no introduction other than his own name and that of the group that he leads, Jahed offers the heroes terms. If they will help him to move against Arijani, he will do whatever he can to aid them in their return to their homeland.

In reality, he has no idea how he might aid them in leaving Sri Raji, but what happens to the PCs after he has used them to battle Arijani means nothing to him. He doesn't believe that the group can pose any kind of threat to him and his followers, so he is certain that he can have them killed if it comes to that. Because he is of lawful alignment, however, he would prefer to keep his word and help the players after Arijani is deposed, but he's not about to let that concern divert him from his life's goal.

Jahed has an extensive knowledge about

Arijani's past. He believes that Sri Raji has been cursed by Ravana because of the wrongs that Arijani committed in the past. He will gladly tell the PCs all that he knows about Arijani, which is just about all there is to know. Perhaps the most important information that he can give them is the fact that the dark lord is truly a rakshasa, that he can be destroyed only by the hand of an outsider, and that he is especially vulnerable to *Ravana's Bane*.

Jahed is aware of the weapon's original purpose (the destruction of an avatar) and the fact that it was lost when Sri Raji was cursed. He knows that both his own followers and the Dark Sisters have been looking for it, but that neither side has been able to find it.

Jahed will also make it a point to tell the PCs that the Dark Sisters have standing orders to destroy any outsiders that they find. He will offer them the protection of his Stalkers, assuring them that this is the only way that they can hope to survive in the domain.

Theatrics

Jahed ought to be played up as somewhat sinister and ominous. He recognizes the PCs' importance and will take steps to be somewhat accommodating. He is a big man who speaks in a gruff voice. Like the PCs, he is an outsider who has been trapped in Sri Raji. Unlike them, however, he has no desire to leave. Rather, he plans to see Arijani destroyed and claim the power of the throne for himself.

The atmosphere around this meeting is one of excitement and tension. Both Jahed and his lieutenants (the men seated around the table) are aware that these outsiders could be the ones who will strike down Arijani.

Despite the fact that Jahed wants the willing cooperation of the heroes, he is not against extorting their help from them. Because he has a plan to do this, he will not let himself be brow-beaten by the PCs. If they try to do this, he'll be just as smug as they are, knowing that the heroes will end up working for him one way or another.

Background

Jahed is aware that he is Ravana's agent in the domain and thinks of himself as a man with a divine mission. He knows a great deal about Arijani's history and the lord's treachery. He will use this information liberally to persuade the PCs that Arijani must be destroyed.

Information about Jahed is presented in the NPC section of this book. His followers are all lycanthropes, and they conform to the standard weretigers described in *Monstrous Compendium*™ (save that they are lawful evil.)

Aftermath

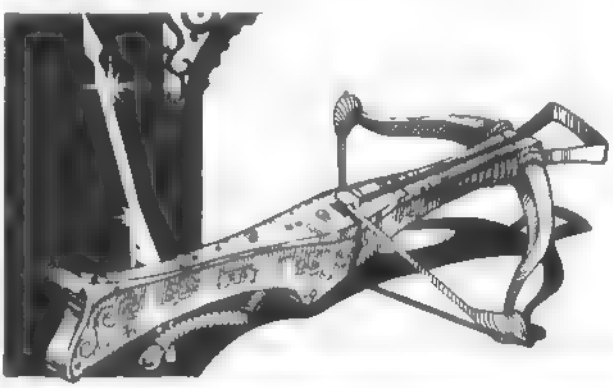
From here, the PCs can move to a number of scenes. By the end of this scene, they'll know what needs to be done to defeat Arijani and, they believe, escape Sri Raji.

If they decide to follow Jahed's instructions, the adventure will continue with Scene 13.

If they opt to attack the men in the room, Jahed will quickly be protected from harm by the other men in the room and the adventure goes on with Scene 9.

If they ask for time to think it over, Jahed will demand that they answer him at once. At this point he becomes more menacing. If the PCs agree to help, then they continue with Scene 13. If not, the Stalkers attack and the adventure moves on to Scene 9.

If the PCs manage to escape from the Stalkers and return to the streets of Pakat or the wilds around it, they will be attacked by the Dark Sisters (Scene 6).



Scene 9: Fighting the Stalkers

Overview

In this scene, the Stalkers attack the PCs. Although it might seem that this is an attempt to destroy them, this is actually a set-up. Jahed's plan is to convince the PCs that they have been infected with lycanthropy and will become weretigers if they do not agree to help him in his battle against Arijani. This scene can be used to resolve any battle between the PCs and the Stalkers, although it is intended to be set in Pakat. Thus, depending upon the path by which the PCs reached Scene 9, the DM may have to improvise a bit.

Preparation

This scene is assumed to take place indoors within the city of Pakat. If this is not the case, the DM will have to stretch things a bit. In order for the fight to begin, the DM will want to sketch out the area in which it is going to take place so that both he and his players will be able to decide on their actions quickly.

To be fully prepared for this scene, the DM will want to have the aforementioned sketch, the *Monstrous Compendium*™ sheet that describes weretigers, and possibly the sheet describing Jahed in the NPCs section of this book.

Narrative

You find yourself confronted by a group of men whose features shift and change even as you watch. Your heart quickens and you gasp as they end their hideous transformation in the shape of great tigers. With a chorus of snarls, growls, and roars, they spring forward to attack.

Resolution

This fight is actually a ruse. The PCs are important to Jahed and he has no desire to see them wounded or killed. If Jahed is present at the battle, he will hang back and allow the others to fight for him.

The number of weretigers present is left to the DM (if not already dictated by the previous scene). It is important for the referee to see to it that the players have a tough time in this battle. It is recommended that there be a minimum of one tiger per adventurer.

The tactics employed by the Stalkers in this fight are somewhat unusual. Each of the tigers will single out an opponent to attack and battle that person until he has managed to draw blood. As soon as that is done, the Stalker will move on to another target

Theatrics

This is meant to be a fast and furious combat scene. Everywhere the heroes turn they should find themselves confronted with roaring tigers,

slashing claws, and gleaming fangs. The DM needs to make sure that everyone gets shaken up quite a bit

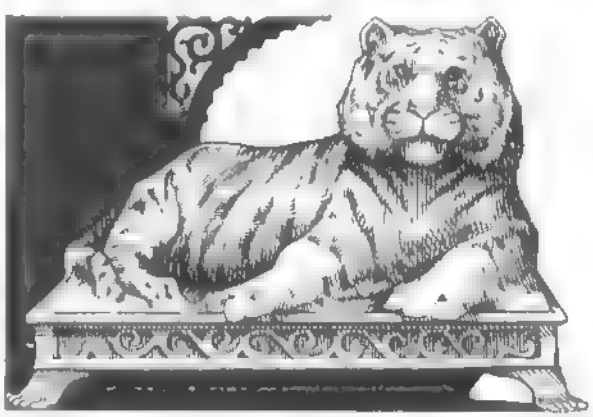
It is important that the players believe the fight is something of a lost cause; this should make them jump at the chance to break off hostilities when the Stalkers make that offer (see below).

Background

Jahed's plan does not call for the death of the heroes. Indeed, that's the last thing he wants. As outsiders, they are vital to his plans, for only they can destroy the foul Arijani.

Aftermath

After the fight has gone on for a few rounds, the Stalkers will sue for peace. Assuming that the PCs permit them to surrender, the adventure will continue with Scene 13. If the PCs decide to show no mercy, the Stalkers will be joined by several others of their kind and the offer will be repeated. If the heroes give in at that point, the story again jumps to Scene 13. If the PCs still decide to fight, the Stalkers will beat them into submission and then go on to Scene 13. If the PCs escape from the Stalkers here, they will be contacted by an agent of the weretigers and (you guessed it) the adventure can continue with Scene 13



Scene 10: The Great University

Overview

This encounter details the player characters' initial contacts with the staff of the university and their meeting with Sidrathi, the scholar who first uncovered *Ravana's Bane* and had it recast into its current shape.

Preparation

This scene is primarily a role-playing one in which the characters learn about the history of the figurine. They will almost certainly have Minja with them, so the DM may want to have a photocopy of her statistics handy for reference. This scene provides a break in the pace of the adventure and shouldn't require too much preparation.

Narrative

The city of Tvashsti is not unlike the one you left behind. The architecture is generally simple, the streets are crowded with people who avoid any manner of contact with you, and the sun bathes you in merciless heat.

After numerous twists and turns, Minja leads you out of a narrow alley and into a wide park that seems to be in the center of the city. In the middle of the park, surrounded by fountains and flower gardens, a majestic temple rises high into the sky and spreads out to dominate your vision.

"Behold," says Minja, "the Great University. Here, the priests of Tvashtri, the god of science and technology, pass the days learning all that there is to learn. If your questions have answers, this is where they can be found."

Resolution

Minja can lead the heroes right to the front door of the university. The DM ought to play up the serenity and beauty of this place. Students wander back and forth engaged in debates of mechanical, philosophical, and magical natures. The fountains dance and splash with an almost musical rhythm. All in all, this is quite a paradise.

Upon reaching the door, they are met by an elderly man with a shaved head who is dressed in golden robes. He welcomes them to the university (although he always calls it "the temple"), but refuses to admit them. He demands that they explain their business and will settle for no evasions. Despite the fact that he is old and frail, his mind is as keen as any sage the PCs have ever met.

Once he knows that the PCs have come to the university in order to research something, he will smile. For a small donation (any magical item will do) he will take them to a research assistant who will help them discover the answers to their questions.

The old man isn't picky about the donation. He won't fall for any trickery, but will accept even the most minor of magical trinkets as payment. The more unusual the object is, the better he will like it

The old man will lead them inside. After several minutes of twisting and turning through austere corridors, he will introduce them to a young student name Paqui. Paqui will be their assistant and do all that he can to help them.

Unfortunately, there isn't too much that Paqui can tell them. The tiger figurine is newly crafted and there is no record of its creation in his archives. After hours of research and digging through files, he will be about to give up when a man walks up behind him. With a few quick words, the newcomer dismisses Paqui. He will motion for the party to follow him, but will say nothing more to them until they reach his office several minutes later.

Once there, he closes the door and introduces himself as Sidrathi, a member of the

university staff. He demands to know where they got the tiger and what they plan to do with it

Assuming that the player characters convince Sidrathi to help them, Sidrathi will tell them all that he knows about *Ravana's Bane*. If they express an interest in having the weapon reforged, he will direct them to Kopa, the silversmith who melted the artifact down for him

Theatrics

The DM should play up the majesty and grandeur of the Great University. This place is ancient and full of wonders and is as fascinating as any the PCs have ever encountered. This entire scene should be upbeat and, if played correctly, might even offer a good deal of comic relief as the PCs attempt to deal with the bookworms and sages that lurk here.

While some might question the use of levity in a RAVENLOFT® game, it's importance should not be overlooked. After all, when evil is contrasted with good it looks all the more sinister.

Background

The Great University was built shortly after Sri Raji came into Ravenloft. Within its walls are all manner of sages and sophists. It is said that there is no question that cannot be answered within the confines of this great building

The university is ruled by a triad of scholars who also act as the leaders of Tvashsti. These three seldom appear in public and communicate with the outside world by means of a handful of faithful agents. It is quite possible that they have discovered a great deal about the fate of their land and the horrors that lurk in the mists around it.

As for Sidrathi, his part in the adventure has been laid out in the section on *Ravana's Bane*. It was he who found the silver crossbow bolt, deduced its true nature, and sought to disguise it. At the time, he did not fully understand that he might be eliminating the only thing that could destroy a great evil. Sidrathi is a good and kind

person, so the last thing that he would want to do is aid the forces of evil

Aftermath

By the end of this scene, the players will probably have learned the true nature of the object that they are carrying. Assuming that they wish to have it recast as a crossbow bolt, they will need to contact Kopa, the master blacksmith who melted it down in the first place. If this is the case, continue the adventure with Scene 11

Scene 11: The Weapon Reforged!

Overview

In this scene, the heroes meet with Kopa, the blacksmith who reshaped the silver crossbow bolt known as *Ravana's Bane* into the harmless-looking figure that has fallen into the players' hands. With his help, they return the weapon to its original shape.

Preparation

As with the previous scene, there is little preparation that must be done for this scene. This predominantly role-playing scene will allow the PCs to make their plans for an assault on the distant temple of Arijani.

Narrative

The blacksmith's shop is similar to those that you have seen countless times before in your travels. The only thing that makes it stand out is the quality of the items displayed for sale here. Without exception, they are among the finest examples of the smiths' craft that you have ever seen. Clearly, you are in the presence of a master.

As you take in the shop, a hulking figure steps out of the back room and into the orange glow of the coals. The blacksmith's features are friendly and detract from the frightful impression made by his magnificent physique.

When he sees that you are not native to the land, he darts nimbly about the room, closing shutters and drawing curtains. In a matter of seconds, you find yourself in darkness broken only by the smoldering inferno of the forge.

Resolution

As long as the characters have a recommendation from Sidrathi, Kopa will be friendly and helpful. If they are belligerent or threatening, he will display some of his tremendous strength by slamming one or two of them around. This ought to earn him some respect.

Melting down the figurine and casting it again as a crossbow bolt is not an easy task. Kopa will be quick to point out that he almost destroyed his equipment trying to melt it down. He is reluctant to reverse the process without some assurance that he will be compensated for any damage done. Once such terms have been reached, he will consent to begin the procedure.

With the door locked and privacy assured, Kopa sets about doing what he does best.

Theatrics

The reforging of the weapon is a grand event. There should be a great deal of flash and majesty about it. Kopa's hammer will boom like thunder as he beats the edge onto the bolt, glowing embers will flash about the room with every blow, and so forth. This is an important point in the adventure and ought to be treated as such.

Background

Kopa does not know the true nature of the object that he has been called to work on. His mastery of the his craft is more than enough for him to recognize that he is dealing with an enchanted object. Because of that, he will refuse to hear any talk about the weapon or its planned use. The less he knows, the better he'll feel.

Aftermath

With the artifact in their hands, the PCs are now ready to move against Arijani. This begins with a trip northward to the Accursed City of Bahru and the Temple of Kali. The details of that march are presented in Scene 12. If they are reluctant to get moving in that direction, the DM can toss in an attack by the Dark Sisters as a prompt.

Scene 12: The Accursed City

Overview

In this scene, the heroes undertake the journey to Bahru and make ready to enter the lair of the dreaded Arijani. While the trip northward is fairly uneventful, they will run into trouble as they travel through the ruins of the Accursed City.

Preparation

It is assumed that this scene occurs as the PCs move through the ruins of Bahru. Thus, they must already have traveled to the city. If they have taken the roads indicated on the map of the domain, the DM will probably want to skip any possible encounters and just allow the party to reach the Accursed City. If they chose to travel in the wilderness, the DM ought to have the party resolve one or more encounters with some jungle hazard.

Once the party reaches the city, the DM will want to have the spirit naga *Monstrous Compendium*™ entry for this encounter.

Narrative

Almost without warning, the road opens up into a sprawling city that clings to the sides of the mountain. Although this place was once a great metropolis, it is now a ruin. Shattered buildings, broken roads, and burned-out temples stretch for miles ahead of you. Clinging vines and other tenacious jungle life has moved in to reclaim sections of the city, but even these plants can do nothing to lessen the impression of lifeless desolation that hangs over this place.

One building stands near the center of the city. Clearly a temple of great size, it is the only intact structure visible as far as the eye can see. Although the building retains a majesty that harkens back to the ages when this city must have teemed with life, there is something sinister and deadly about it. Without a doubt, this is where Arijani lives.

Resolution

No matter what route the PCs take to reach the temple, they will encounter Vergga, a spirit naga. This encounter should begin with the heroes detecting the smell of rotting flesh as they move through the ruins.

Shortly afterwards, they will begin to sense that something is watching them. Every shadow threatens to conceal an enemy. The DM can toss a couple of false alarms at the party (rocks falling, an animal skittering about in the shadows, etc.) to keep the party on their toes.

Once the players have decided that the DM is just toying with them, Vergga strikes. Her assault begins as she casts a *haste* spell on herself and then attacks.

Spirit Naga (1): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 9; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA spells, poison; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ H (15' long); ML 14; XP 2,000; Treasure X (B,T).
Wizard Spells: *Affect normal fires, detect magic, gaze reflection, magic missile; blindness, scare; haste*
Priest Spells: *Command, cure light wounds* (×2), *darkness; fire trap, hold person.*

With the *haste* spell cast, the naga will have a movement rate of 24 and be able to bite twice per round for 1d3 points of damage. The bite of a spirit naga injects a type F poison (injected, immediate, death/0). In addition, the creature can *charm* anyone that meets her gaze unless a saving throw vs. paralysis is made.

Vergga begins her attack by causing some sort of commotion that will draw an adventurer to investigate it. As soon as the person draws near, she pops her head out of some hole or crack in the debris and attempts to use her *charm* gaze. Once that is done, she will attack freely using both her magic and poisonous bite to best effect.

Theatrics

Vergga is a clever and dangerous opponent. She will make maximum use of her spells, as can be seen by her use of *haste* prior to the combat. Because of the debris that fills the ruined city, she can move about snake-like, vanish into a hole, and then reappear somewhere else to attack again. The DM will want to make the most of this tactic to keep PCs continually turning and defending on new fronts

Background

Vergga is one of a handful of spirit nagas who live in the ruins of Bahru. She delights in torturing the few visitors that come into the city and even feeds upon the Dark Sisters and the Stalkers when they wander by.

If it weren't for the fact that the city is honeycombed with tunnels and disused sewers, the spirit naga probably would have been hunted down and slain long ago. As it is, however, no one has been able to track her

If the PCs manage to capture Vergga or somehow talk with her, she can warn them that nothing inside of Arijani's temple is what it seems. She knows that he is a rakshasa and will point this out if the PCs do not already know it. She will use this knowledge, and make up lies to add to it, in an attempt to buy her freedom if defeat seems certain

Aftermath

Once the heroes have defeated Vergga, they can complete their journey to Arijani's temple, Mahakala. The events there are described in the second part of this module.

Scene 13: The Liar's Curse

Overview

This scene takes place after PCs have met Jahed and learned about his desire to have them destroy Arijani. In order to insure their loyalty (or force their cooperation), Jahed tells them that they have been infected with lycanthropy. If they wish to be cured, they will do as he wishes. If they fail, they will become transformed into evil weretigers.

Preparation

When this scene begins, the PCs will have either agreed to help the Stalkers or refused. The way in which this scene will be resolved depends upon which condition has been met.

If the party refused, then they have been forced to fight one or more weretigers and some of the party members have certainly been wounded. This is ideal, because Jahed should have no trouble at all convincing the wounded PCs that they will shortly become weretigers.

If all or most of the party has avoided such injury, Jahed will simply explain that they have been cursed or drugged or whatever. He'll use an explanation that seems certain to avoid arousing any suspicion on the part of the characters.

Narrative

A slow smile drifts across Jahed's features. Any kindness that may have been in his face before melts away and you find yourself looking into eyes as cold and harsh as any that you have ever seen.

"Many among my group tell me that you cannot be trusted. They say that you are outsiders and will betray us to the Dark Sisters. *I* say that they are wrong. I think that we can count on your absolute loyalty to our cause, my friends.

"However, because we must be certain of your actions, I have taken the liberty of seeing to it that you have each been given a little gift. The blood in your veins now carries the disease of lycanthropy. Soon, you will become as we are.

"If you do as we ask and return here with proof that Arijani has died, I shall see to it that this curse is lifted from you and that you are returned to your homes. If you fail me, then you will become shapeshifters. Do not worry too much about that, for I am certain that you will grow to enjoy the taste of blood and human flesh as much as I."

Resolution

In point of fact, Jahed is lying. He has actually taken steps to see to it that the PCs were not infected during any skirmishes that they might have had with his agents. He looks upon lycanthropy not as a curse, but as a gift. He would never pass this ability on to anyone that he didn't know and trust.

What Jahed really plans to do is employ a *nightmare* spell (the reverse of the 5th-level wizard spell *dream*) cast by one of his minions to send terrifying dreams to the PCs. Each night, for the rest of the adventure, one of the heroes will have horribly realistic dreams that he or she has become a tiger and is stalking and devouring innocent people

These visions will be graphic and sickening, but will not inflict the 1d10 points of damage normally done by the spell. They will, however, prevent characters who are injured from healing lost hit points and make it impossible for spellcasters to regain expended spells.

Theatrics

The DM will want to do everything that he can to convince the players that their characters have been infected with the dreadful disease of lycanthropy. If they don't recognize the horror of this fate, simply make it clear to them that they

will eventually end up as evil creatures roaming the mists of Ravenloft. Very few players will want to stand by and watch their favorite character become a villainous NPC

Background

Jahed has used this technique before. He is quite good at seeing to it that his victims fall for his trickery. The DM should keep in mind that he can arrange for all sorts of curious things to happen that will make the PCs believe what he has told them.

One of his favorite tricks is to have a pair of tigers happen upon the party in the wilderness. Instead of attacking, these tigers bring offerings of dead meat and the like as gifts. Of course, they are acting under the instructions of the weretigers, but the DM ought to make the players think that they are just "welcoming your characters to the family" or some such.

Aftermath

If the PCs have not yet met Minja, the Stalkers will see to it that they are introduced to her. Jahed knows how hard it is for outlanders to get around in Sri Raji and he knows that she can be trusted This action is detailed in Scene 4.

If they already have Minja with them, he'll hurry them along their way. This will take them either to Bahru (Scene 12) or the Great University (Scene 10).

At last, the characters have faced the challenges of Sri Raji and found their way to Mahakala, the temple home of Arijani. Those who have fought battles with the beasts of the jungle, the deadly priestesses of Kali, and the ominous Stalkers might think themselves well-adjusted to the dangers of this tropical domain. Such foolhardy folk are in for a tragic surprise. The nightmare begins here.

Here, deep within the broken and cracked walls of this ancient temple, lies the heart of this domain. Adventurers exploring the walls of Mahakala will find that nothing is as it seems and that even the most passive and seemingly secure area is a place of deadly danger. This is the realm of the rakshasa, whose lies are more potent than most people's truths.

Nested Illusions

One of Arijani's most deceptive tricks is the creation of "nested illusions." He cloaks an object in multiple illusions, only one of which is visible at any one time. The act of disbelief in the first illusion will act as the trigger for the second, so it is impossible to detect the fact that more than one illusion has been cast on the target, because only one of the spells is active at a given time.

Consider the following encounter as an example of a nested illusion: The party is walking down a hallway that looks far too safe to be trusted. In actuality, there is a pit set in the center of the corridor that will drop anyone who steps into it 30 feet onto a grid of poisoned spikes. An illusion has been cast on the hall to make it appear that the area is safe to pass through.

Upon starting down the hall, someone in the party states that he is going to disbelieve. A saving throw versus spells is made and the first illusion is defeated. The collapse of the first illusion, however, triggers a second one that makes the pit appear to be closer to the party than it actually is. Thus, anyone attempting to vault over the illusionary pit will land on an illusionary floor and fall onto the real spikes below.

The above example shows an illusion with only two levels of nesting. Arijani has several that are even more deeply nested than that. He has others that are not nested at all. Because of this, most intruders in the temple quickly lose all track of what is real and what is not. Some are said to have been driven utterly mad by the impossible things that they have seen inside the temple.

Adjudicating Illusions

There are numerous ways by which illusions and similar magics may be defeated. The most common of these is disbelief. However, the great variety of magical spells in the AD&D® game offers the players a fairly wide array of tools with which to explore Mahakala. Some of the most common spells for defeating illusions are dealt with in this section. In addition to the text below, the DM should read pages 82-84 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Disbelief

Nearly every gaming group has some house rule for "disbelieving" illusions. Much of this stems from the first edition AD&D® game, which was less than clear on the topic. The 2nd Edition game is more specific. Dungeon Masters are, therefore, advised to review the "Magic (Illusions)" section of the *Player's Handbook* before running this part of the adventure.

It is important to remember that disbelieving an illusion is an action that takes an entire round. If this effort is made, the character is generally entitled to a saving throw versus spells in order to break through the illusion and see it for what it is. If the illusion is particularly well

thought out and believable, there may be a penalty to the throw while a clumsy or out-of-place illusion might provide its victims with a bonus. Because Arijani, like all rakshasas, is a master of illusions, his creations are especially convincing and will almost always impose at least a –2 modifier on any attempt to disbelieve them. The most important thing to remember during the game is that any attempt to disbelieve requires an action. During this time of concentration, the adventurer is vulnerable to any number of other threats.

Often, some members of an adventuring party will succumb to an illusion while others do not. When this happens, the unaffected will often try to convince their less fortunate companions that they face no real danger. When this happens, the person who believes in the illusion is permitted to make a saving throw to escape belief in the image that he faces. A bonus of up to +4 might be permitted when such throws are attempted. The exact bonus is up to the DM but ought to take into account the Charisma of the persuading character, his or her relationship with the victim, and the overall believability of the illusion.

One final comment about disbelieving illusions is in order at this point. The DM must make all of the saving throws for disbelief during this adventure. By not allowing the players to make these checks, the DM can keep them guessing about what is real and what is not. This sort of uncertainty will greatly enhance the mood of fear and tension that hangs over Mahakala.

Detecting Magic

When a *detect magic* or similar spell is cast upon an area that is covered with an illusion, the caster will notice the presence of a spell. Higher level casters are likely to note that the spell is of the *illusion/phantasm* school (as described in the *Player's Handbook*).

A spell of this sort will not reveal whether the magic it detects contains a nested illusion. Anyone who attempts to disbelieve in an illusion discovered by the casting of a *detect magic* is entitled to a +4 bonus to his saving throw. After all, once a hero knows that wizardry is at work in the area, it's a lot easier for him to believe that what he's seeing is a product of that magic.

Other Detection Spells

There are countless divination and detection spells in the AD&D® game. These will function normally on Arijani's illusions because of the sheer mastery that he has with such spells. Thus, if Arijani creates an illusion of twenty skeletons marching toward the party, a *detect undead* spell would indicate that the skeletons were exactly what they appeared to be.

Dispel Magic
The casting of this spell will utterly destroy any illusions in its area of effect, subject to the normal restrictions on that spell. All of the illusions in Mahakala resist the effects of this spell at Arijani's level (13th).

Wizard Eye
Spells of this nature are just as vulnerable to illusions as the actual sense organs of the caster himself. This applies also to spells like *clairvoyance* or similar scrying techniques.

Anti-Magic Shell
Any wizard encased in an *anti-magic shell* is immune to all manner of phantasms (spells that directly affect his mind) but stills sees illusions as what they appear to be. Illusionary objects and creatures cannot pass through the *anti-magic shell* and may thus be seen for what they are.

True Seeing
This spell will utterly negate the effects of any illusion that Arijani has woven. It is a potent tool that explorers of Mahakala will want to use for self protection in the most dire of circumstances.

Spell Turning
This enchantment has no effect at all upon the illusion placed throughout Mahakala. None of these effects is targeted on a single person. They cannot be turned back upon their caster.

Outside Mahakala

The first part of this adventure ended with the heroes reaching the ruins of Bahru and making their way to the temple. The second part begins when they enter the temple itself. The following text can be read to the players as a description of the temple.

> From the ruins of this ancient city, a single, intact building stands tall. Clearly worn by the passage of time and draped with slender, brightly flowered vines, the structure is a magnificent piece of architecture. As you stand before it, a hot, wet wind gusts past and carries the sickly sweet smell of rotting meat to your party.
>
> There appears to be only one entrance to the ominous structure: a vast pair of bronze doors set within the gaping jaws of a great stone tiger. The tiger's head is carved from a single piece of marble. Unlike the rest of the building, it is not cracked and shows no sign of aging. A pair of giant emeralds, each the size of a human head, gleam in the eyes of the great cat.

The emeralds are nothing more than cut glass that has been enhanced with a *phantasmal force* spell. Further, they are enchanted so that anyone who comes within 30 feet of them will trigger a *light* spell that causes them to glow with a shimmering green light. This will alert the Dark Sisters within that intruders have reached Mahakala. A description of this phenomenon can be found in the section on "Entering Mahakala."

Climbing the Walls

It is possible that a group of adventurers may wish to attempt to scale the walls of the temple for one reason or another. If this happens, they will be attacked by the vines that cling to the walls of the temple, for these are deadly tri-color fronds as described in the *Monstrous Compendium™*.

Tri-Flower Frond: AL N; AC 9; MV Nil; HD 2+8; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT See below; Dmg See below; SA See below; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 10; XP 175; Treasure Nil.

As soon as someone nears one of these vines, it will attack with its orange flower which fires 2d4 three-foot-long, pollen-covered tendrils. Anyone hit by one of these must save versus poison or fall into a coma for 1d4 hours. Unconscious victims are attacked by yellow flowers that dribble acidic sap on them which does 2d4 points of damage. Water can be used to wash off the acid. In addition, red flowers will attack by inserting slender filaments into the body and drawing out 1d6 damage points worth of blood per round.

If some way can be found to avoid or destroy the vines, the characters are free to scale the walls. They will, however, find nothing of interest.

Entering Mahakala

There are two ways into the building. One is the main entrance, a pair of large brass doors set within the ornate carving of a tiger's head at the eastern end of the building. The other is a secret door placed on the westernmost wall of Mahakala.

The Secret Door

It is unlikely that any group of adventurers will find the secret entrance as it is protected by its physical construction (a roll is required to detect it), a most convincing illusion, and an excellent lock that is also protected with an illusion.

In order for the secret door to be uncovered, a character must first disbelieve the illusion that there is no secret door on the back wall. This requires a full round of concentration and a saving throw versus spells with a –4 penalty.

Once that is done, a roll must be made to detect the secret door itself. This roll is made with the normal chances of success.

If steps one and two are accomplished, the lock on the door must be defeated. This lock is set with an illusion so that any roll to pick it will

fail automatically unless a disbelief roll is made on the lock (again, there is a –4 penalty). Even with the success of this second disbelief roll, the rogue attempting to pick the lock will find himself suffering a –20% chance to his skill roll because of the fine craftsmanship that went into the making of the lock.

There are other ways to defeat the door once it has been found. Arijani has taken these into account and placed numerous spells to prevent them from functioning. For instance, a *knock* spell cast on the secret door will trigger yet another illusion, this one giving the appearance that the door did not actually open.

The Brass Doors

The more accessible means of entering the temple is through the main entrance on the eastern side of the temple. This is certainly an impressive portal, but walking in through the front door is hardly the sort of thing that a group of adventurers is going to do lightly. Still, there is really no other truly viable option.

The following text can be used to describe the main entrance to players.

> The doors within the mouth shine even in the shadows, giving them the impression of a magical aura. A bittersweet wind sweeps past, hissing with a raspy sound against the carved face. There appears to be no latch, lock, or bar on the doors.

In actuality, the doors are covered with an illusion. While they truly are bronze, they are old and battered. Only a *phantasmal force* spell gives them their luster and aura of splendor.

Anyone moving toward the doors will cause the eyes of the tiger to begin glowing as described above. It is possible to prevent this from happening, mainly through the use of a spell like *dispel magic*, which can be directed at the emerald eyes. When the eyes are triggered and begin to glow, the following text describes the scene:

> Suddenly, a bright light flashes to life within the emerald eyes of the tiger. The entire area around the mouth and the brass doors is bathed in a macabre green glow that throws long shadows behind you. It is hard to shake off the feeling that the entire building is a great beast waiting to swallow you.

Once the party reaches the doors, they will find that they open easily with even the slightest touch. Beyond the doors is an antechamber with two more brass doors set on the opposite wall. This is "the Maw," and it is room 1 on the map of Mahakala

Within Mahakala

1. The Maw

> You stand in an antechamber some 20 feet wide by 30 feet long. There are no torches or lanterns here, although a half dozen empty sconces shaped like bestial hands adorn the walls. A soft carpet with a color like fresh blood covers the floor and the smell of distant fires lingers in the air. Double brass doors offer a way west, into the temple, and east, through the jaws of the tiger and out into the ruined city beyond.

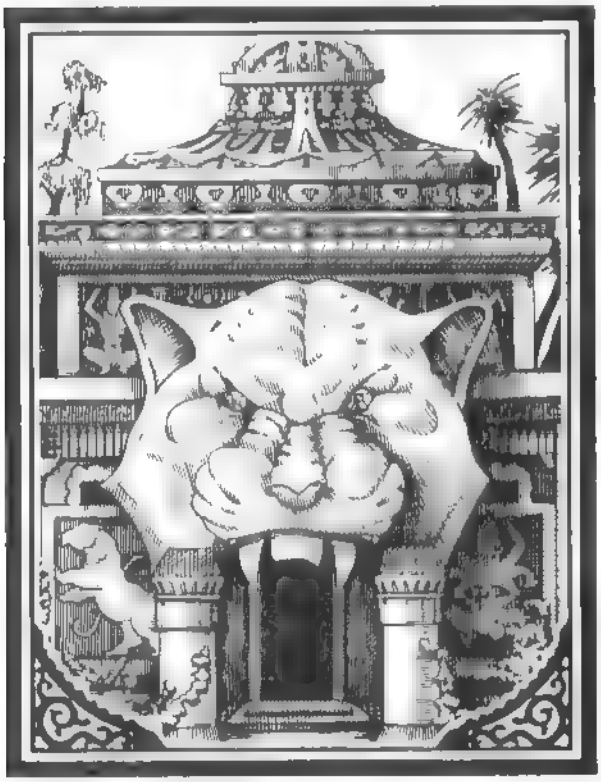
This room, which is quite empty and featureless, has been enchanted with a *mirage arcana* spell. If the spell is broken, the party will see barren stone walls and a floor covered with half-an-inch of dust. Because none of the temple staff enter through this area (they all use the secret door), there are no footsteps in the dust except those made by the party.

As soon as the last member of the party steps into area 1 on the map, a new illusion will activate. It doesn't matter whether or not the *mirage arcana* spell is still in effect. The following text describes the new illusion

A grinding sound fills the air behind you. Whirling, you see the great marble jaws close with a thunderous crack. As your last view of the outside world vanishes, the roar of a great cat echoes in the darkness around you.

All that has really happened is that a stone wall has slid into place blocking off the exit. A *dispel magic* or similar spell will make this clear. Forcing open the stone wall will require a *bend bars/lift gates* roll.

On the other hand, the eastern doors leading into the temple can be pushed open easily. Like the western doors that led into the Maw, they are made of bronze and have been set with an illusion to make them appear bright and gleaming. There are no locks or traps on the doors to area 2.



2. Puchan's Pagoda

This is a long, slender chamber that runs eighty feet from east to west but is only twenty feet wide. Four pair of alcoves, each with a life-sized statue of a man in it, are evenly spaced down its length. The walls are decorated with mosaics depicting maps, traveling equipment, and various landscapes. Unlit lanterns fashioned from gleaming bronze and silver hang from hooks on the wall between the alcoves.

If any of the lanterns is removed from its hook, a *light* spell is triggered within it. This spell has been designed to give the impression that the lantern has a burning wick inside; it is actually magical. The players are free to take these with them as light sources, but the DM should remember that they are magical and that Arijani (or any of the Dark Sisters) knows a command word that will instantly extinguish the light and replace it with a *darkness, 15' radius* spell.

No doubt the adventurers will want to examine the statues, which rest on pedestals in the alcoves. As each one is inspected, the following text can be read:

You see a carving of an aged man with a frail build, hawkish features, and a long ponytail. The old man wears the robes of a commoner, despite his noble features.

The craftsmanship is so fine that no detail has escaped the sculptor's notice. Even the obvious fact that the statue has been crafted from solid stone makes it difficult to shake the impression that it could jump down from its pedestal at any moment.

The statues all portray the man as being armed, although in each rendering he holds a different weapon. An examination of the various individual statues will provide the players with the following information:

Statue A—1st alcove, right: In this figure, the old man is clearly a farmer. He holds a sickle in his hand and has his arm drawn back as if about to sweep the blade through a clump of crops.

Statue B—1st alcove, left: Here, the old man is shown as a traveler in the jungles of Sri Raji. He holds a machete in his hand with which he is clearly about to chop at a vine or other obstacle.

Statue C—2nd right: In this likeness, the old man is portrayed as a warrior. While he wears no armor, he holds a circular shield before him as if to ward off an opponents blow. His other arm holds a slender spear as if it were about to be thrown.

Statue D—2nd left: The fourth statue shows the old man as an archer. His bow is an elegant, recurved weapon drawn back with obvious effort. A gleaming silver arrow has been nocked and is ready to be fired.

Statue E—3rd right: This statue depicts the old man holding a long, golden lance. Despite the fact that the weapon is twice his height, he has fixed it to receive a charge and shows no fear of the approaching enemy.

Statue F—3rd left: Here, the old man holds a cumbersome-looking axe high above his head. The weapon appears to weigh at least as much as he does, yet he grips it tightly and seems to wield it as if it weighed no more than a dagger.

Statue G—4th right: In this likeness, the old man holds a long, slender dagger in one hand. He is crouched low and looks very much like a predator about to spring on an unsuspecting victim.

Statue H—4th left: In this pose, the old man kneels and carefully aims a crossbow with a silver bolt at some unknown enemy. His face is set with concentration, giving the impression that the shot is a difficult one.

Examining any of the statues visually is perfectly safe. However, touching one of them will trigger a reaction of some sort. Because these effects are magical, an attempt to detect traps will always fail. Spells like *detect magic* or *detect traps* will reveal that something is amiss. To determine what happens, roll 1d4 on the following table. For each statue after the first, add +1 to the roll. Thus, if all of the statues are touched, the last roll will be made as 1d4+7.

1d4	Effect
1	The eyes on the statue light up and produce a glow similar to that generated by a *light* spell. This is only a special effect.
2	A *magic mouth* spell is triggered, causing the statue to scream as if it were in great pain.
3	An illusion is invoked that makes it appear as if the statue were striking the person touching it. However, its weapon will pass harmlessly through the victim, doing no damage.
4	A *transmute rock to mud* spell is triggered, causing the statue to melt away and pool on the floor. The chemical composition of the statue is such that the mud created by the spell is actually a type M poison (contact/1-4 minutes/20/5). Anyone touching the mud is affected by the poison.
5	As in #3, but the weapon is more tangible and inflicts 1d4 points of damage.
6	As in #4, but the mud created is highly acidic and causes 1d6 points of damage to anyone it touches.
7	The statue animates and hands the person who touched it the weapon that it holds. In the case of the machete, treat this as a short sword. The silver crossbow bolt and arrow are actually *cursed weapons –2.* The golden lance is actually a cursed weapon that has the same properties as a *cursed backbiting spear*
8	The statue appears to come to life. This is only an illusion that can be disbelieved or dispelled. However, while it exists it has the same statistics as a clay golem.

9 The person touching the statue must make a saving throw versus petrification or be instantly petrified. This is actually an illusion, and the person will only be paralyzed. If it is not dispelled, the paralysis will wear off in 2d6 rounds.
10 The statue animates and attacks. This is an illusion and can be disbelieved or dispelled. However, while it exists it has the same statistics as a stone golem.
11 The statue animates and attacks. This is an illusion and can be disbelieved or dispelled. However, while it exists it has the same statistics as an earth elemental

Arijani uses this room to test the abilities of his enemies. From his lair in Area 13, he can monitor all that transpires in this room and judge the strengths and weaknesses displayed by intruders. Because of this, the DM will want to take note of how the player characters handle themselves here.

If they take a systematic approach to exploring the area and show themselves to be seasoned adventurers, Arijani will judge them to be seasoned veterans who deserve his own attention. This means that the PCs are in an awful lot of trouble.

If they appear competent, but not overly skilled, Arijani will leave them to his mother and her Dark Sisters. If they later prove themselves more resourceful than his first estimation had indicated, he'll step in and oversee their destruction personally.

If they stumble through the room looking like a bunch of novices, he'll pass them off as "comic relief" and order the Dark Sisters to leave them alone so that his traps can be given a good test. Once he tires of them, he'll step in and slaughter them himself.

3. Rudra's Pagoda

Note: This room has a high ceiling with a balcony running around it half way up. The balcony area is described as area 16.

You have entered a vast chamber 100 feet long and 60 feet wide. Ten square pillars of stone set with ornate traces of silver rise into the air, past a balcony some 20 feet over your heads, and on to merge with a ceiling 40 feet above you. Brilliantly polished brass doors offer exits to the east and west.

The walls of this room are covered with gleaming black tiles and mosaics that make it look as if you are standing on a hill in the center of a low, sprawling city. The ceiling has been painted black and studded with gems so that the entire place has the look a peaceful night. A large bronze hemisphere has been set in the center of the ceiling, radiating a light that looks like that of a full moon. This is odd, for Sri Raji has no moon.

So fine is the artistry of this place that it is not hard to imagine a gentle breeze blowing past you and the sounds of crickets hanging in the air.

No illusions are in effect here. What happens next depends upon Arijani's assessment of the characters. If he is attending to them himself (or if they have entered this room without passing through area 2), then read the section entitled "The Storm." If he has left them to the Dark Sisters, then they must face "The Archers." If he has dismissed them as fodder, then they will have to deal with "The Trap."

If the players try to escape the room before dealing with the encounter selected for them, they will find that the exits are sealed with a *wall of fire*, which springs into existence as the brass doors are neared. Anyone within 10 feet of the door is burned for 2d4 points of damage, and anyone between 10 and 20 feet suffers 1d4 points of damage. It is possible to jump through the fire, but doing so will inflict an additional 4d4+9 points of damage to the person attempting it. This is not an illusion, although some characters may try to treat it as such.

The Storm

After the players have had a few seconds to think about what they are going to do, read them the following passage:

Gradually, you notice that the air has grown heavier since you entered this room. The atmosphere carries a sense of looming power, just as it does before a tremendous storm.

Even as you watch, the sparkling sky overhead is obscured by thick clouds the color of charcoal. The darkness of the room is shattered by a blinding flash of lightning; a deafening clap of thunder slams you to the ground. Driving rain bursts from the clouds and instantly drenches you.

While the clouds and the rain are an illusion, the lightning is not. The silver traces in the pillars are being charged with an electrical current that builds up and discharges each turn. Thus, one of the heroes will be hit with a *lightning bolt* each turn (roll randomly to determine which one is struck). The bolt inflicts 4d8 points of damage (save vs. spells for half damage).

The lightning can be stopped by the destruction of the bronze hemisphere on the ceiling. Remember, Sri Raji has no moon, so any depiction of the night sky here ought to be lacking one as well. Thus, the orb overhead is very much out of place. The globe has an AC of 2 and will be destroyed after it has taken 15 points of damage. Once it is eliminated, the illusion of the storm fades away and the heroes can exit freely through the east and west doors

It is possible to escape the lightning by vaulting through the walls of fire and using the exits on the ground floor, however that is likely to be looked upon as a last alternative by the players. An inventive player might try to reach the balcony and find an escape from there. If this is done, the lightning will always attack anyone attempting to climb to the upper level. With stamina it ought to be possible to reach the balcony. Once this is done by even one player, the illusion of the storm suddenly vanishes and the lightning stops. The adventure can continue with the description of Room 16.

The Archers

Note: This encounter begins with an attack from three archers on the balcony level. It is assumed that they are able to fire one volley before the PCs know that they are there. If this is not the case, the DM will need to change the opening narrative slightly. The text also assumes that at least one of the archers hits the target since they all fire at the same person.

As you look around the room, you hear the soft snap of crossbows and the hiss of something fast cutting through the air. Sudden pain burns in your side as a black feathered shaft bites into your body. From the balcony high overhead, maniacal laughter echoes in the air.

Archers (3): AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 12; XP 1,500 (500 each); Treasure Nil

The snipers are women and each has been cloaked in an illusion that makes her appear to be horribly diseased. Although this is an illusion and there is no danger of infection from drawing near to one of them, the PCs ought to be encouraged to make checks and saving throws from time to time, giving them the impression that some horrible disease may linger in the air here.

Once the archers have unleashed their first volley of arrows, the players will have a chance to defend their characters. Each round, the trio of archers will fire again, concentrating on a single target until they bring him down. They are vulnerable to return fire and to magic. If any PC manages to reach the balcony, the women will switch to short swords and defend themselves in melee combat.

Once the three women are defeated, the fiery barriers will be lifted and it will be possible to leave the room normally.

The Trap

If Arijani has deemed the adventurers so lowly that not even his minions need to bother with them, he will allow the automated trap in this room to deal with them.

The trigger for the trap is a slender, nearly invisible cord that runs between the middle two pillars. If the cord is tugged (by someone walking into it) or broken in some way, the shaded area of the floor will be rendered briefly non-corporeal. When this happens, anyone standing on it will drop through the floor and fall 10 feet into a long rectangular pit, suffering 2d6 points of damage. Anyone wearing a *ring of feather falling* or a similar device will only be half way through the floor when it becomes substantial again. This is horribly painful and ultimately fatal to the character. No saving throw is allowed.

The bottom of the pit is filled with the rotting corpses and skeletal remains of Arijani's past victims. The only physical way out of this chamber is to break through the stone floor overhead. As a general rule, this will take 1d4+2 hours to accomplish. Dwarves or other characters who have some familiarity with mining can cut this time in half.

Each full hour spent in this morass of diseased corpses, bloated flies, and stinking ooze carries with it a chance of infecting the characters with a disease. At the end of each hour spent in the pit, each character should make a saving throw versus poison. Failure indicates that the person has been infected with a debilitating disease as per the *Player's Handbook*.

4. Indra's Pagoda

You have entered a rectangular room 40 feet wide by 50 feet long. The walls of this room are painted to make it appear as if you were standing in the center of a great battle between men and half-human tigers. The ceiling is an ornate mosaic depicting a solar disc twenty feet above you.

In the center is a life-sized marble carving of a huge white elephant with an ornate howdah perched on its back. The eyes of this magnificent beast scintillate and smoulder as if they were fragments of the sun itself.

Although the statue is real, the glowing eyes and ornate decorations are illusions.

This room is directly below room 15, where a pair of Arijani's minions are standing. In actuality, the ceiling is undecorated stone that has been rendered permanently *invisible* and set with an illusion of the mosaic described above. From room 15, the two Dark Sisters have a perfect view of everything that the party does in this area.

As the party looks around the room, the Sisters will set to work on a deadly ambush. In the first round, they will trigger an iron portcullis that drops across the exit with a loud crash.

During the second round, they open a pair of six-inch square panels in the ceiling and uncork a pair of glass bottles. One is filled with a green liquid that has the consistency of honey while the other holds a red fluid that is much like oily water. These two chemicals are harmless apart, but if combined they create a deadly poison.

During the third round, they drop the bottles which tumble to the floor and shatter, splattering

liquid. Each player character must make a saving throw versus breath weapons per bottle dropped to avoid being caught by the spray from each bottle. Each player character will be making two saving throws.

Any character who is hit by the spray from both bottles (that is, fails both saves) has been splashed with both elements of this unusual binary toxin. The effects are quite dramatic and deadly. This is a type N poison (contact, 1 minute, death/25). Anyone who is affected by it, whether they save (versus poison) to avoid death or not, will have their skin turn chalky white and draw tight across their skull, making them look like some manner of horrible, grinning undead creature. This has the additional effect of reducing Charisma by 3 points.

Because there are now obvious pools of liquid on the ground where the bottles crashed, it is possible that someone will examine both puddles and, in the process, come into contact with both elements of the poison. Any PC who touches both puddles will be affected by the toxin and must save versus poison or die.

5. Siva's Pagoda

This is a rectangular room 40 feet across and 80 feet long with brass double doors at each of the compass points. In the center of the room a great pillar of flame surges upward from a circular pit 30 feet in diameter. The flame licks against the ceiling, splashing outward in crimson ripples that remind you of water pouring onto a floor. Wave after wave of intense heat rolls out from the fire, threatening to burn exposed flesh and leave you forever scarred.

The flames in this room are very real. They have been created by a spell that is like the clerical *wall of fire*. Anyone who is in the room will take 1d4 points of damage and those who come within 10 feet of the flame will suffer 2d4 points of damage. Anyone making direct contact with the pillar of fire will be burned for 2d6+9 points of damage.

In the center of the fire is a spiral staircase that leads up through a hole in the ceiling and into room 14. An illusion makes it impossible to see the stairs within the flames. However, if someone attempts to disbelieve in the fire and succeeds, they will be able see the staircase.

Ascending the stairs is easy enough if some way can be found to negate the effects of the flames. The Dark Sisters all use magical means for this purpose. If someone attempts to dash up the stairs while the flames are still able to affect him, he will suffer two rounds of exposure (a total of 4d6+18 points of damage).

6. Vayu's Pagoda

You stand in a chamber 40 feet wide by 50 feet long. The stone walls are cracked and broken, leaving the floor strewn with rocks of all shapes and sizes. A gentle breeze circulates in here, whistling as it blows through the fractures and fissures in the wall. The gentle sounds of the whispering wind seem unusually relaxing and captivating.

Each turn that the party spends in this room will see an increase in the velocity of the wind and the triggering of several other special effects.

On the first turn, a *solid fog* trickles down from the top of the doorway and closes off any quick escape from the room. This fog fills the entire 10-foot by 20-foot opening that houses the brass doors. In addition to the fog, the breeze increases to a stiff wind, causing dust and small bits of debris to kick up into the air. At this point, anyone who fails a saving throw versus breath weapons (with a +4 bonus) catches a face full of dust and is blinded for 1d6 rounds.

On the second turn, the wind grows into a roaring gale that makes conversation difficult. Anyone who fails a saving throw versus breath weapons will now be knocked down. In addition, dozens of sharp blades now extend from the cracks in the wall. Anyone leaning against the wall (or climbing it) when this happens suffer 1d6 points of damage. The wind is now so strong that decent-sized

stones are being hurled through the air, doing 1d4 points of damage to everyone in the room.

It is easy to climb the walls using the spikes as hand and foot holds. However, there is no escape from the room higher up, so anyone who climbs up will gain nothing but altitude. This consideration will be important later on in this encounter.

On the third turn, the wind becomes so strong that the characters stand a good chance of being lifted off the ground. Anyone who fails a save versus breath weapons will be caught up by the wind and tossed into the spikes. The DM should roll 1d4 to see how many spikes the victim is impaled on and then roll that many six-sided dice to see how much damage is done.

On the fourth turn, the wind suddenly stops, the spikes slide back into the wall, and the *solid fog* goes away. Anyone who was climbing the wall with the spikes now falls to the ground unless a Dexterity check is made. The fall is assumed to cause 2d6 points of damage because of the debris on which the victim will land.

Portions of what transpires in this room are real, while the rest is mere illusion. The wind and the rocks are quite real, but the spikes and the fog are not. Anyone who believes that he is climbing on the spikes is merely making use of the cracks and fissures in the wall.

DM note: The spikes in this room, even though illusory, will cause very real damage if not disbelieved by the PC taking the damage. The *Player's Handbook* gives excellent instructions on how to adjudicate illusionary damage. If the DM is unfamiliar with this aspect of play, refer to the section on "Illusions" on pages 82-84 in the *Player's Handbook*.

7. Ravana's Pagoda

You have entered a vast room 60 feet wide by 90 feet long. Four pairs of black stone pillars reach upward to support a ceiling 40 feet over your head. The pillars are set with sinister bas-reliefs of half-human feline creatures. The walls are decorated in mosaics that depict a great metropolis spreading out in all directions around you.

Flames rise from the buildings of this city, reaching into the night sky and forming cruel faces that laugh at the suffering masses below. Twisted, evil-looking people are shown battling great tiger-like men on every street. These graphic scenes of death and mutilation sicken even the most valiant and experienced adventurers.

Arijani has built this room as a memorial to the night when Bahru was destroyed. To him, this is a celebration of his own triumph over his father and the elimination of the other rakshasa from Sri Raji.

When the characters enter this room, Arijani will confront them. He is not so foolish as to do this in person. Because he doesn't know the limits of their abilities, he makes his appearance with a spell that is similar to a wizard's *project image*. The differences between Arijani's magic and the *project image* spell are that the rakshasa need not see the image he is projecting and that the image must exactly mimic the actions of its creator at all times.

At first, this room will seem to be exactly as described above.

Once the party enters the area and starts to explore, however, things will change. Arijani will appear to step out the shadows in one corner of the room. His voice echoes in rich laughter that is so dark and fearsome that it sends chills through the party. The following text can be used to describe this scene:

An echoing laughter resounds throughout the room. You spin to face its source, and see a dark figure step out of the shadows. Looking more like a diabolical tiger than a man, the creature smiles at you in a predatory manner. His teeth gleam like keenly sharpened knives in the dim light. His eyes glow with hate as he looks over your party. At last, he falls silent, but it seems that the mocking echoes of his laughter will remain in your ears forever.

"Allow me to introduce myself," he says in a purring, casual tone. "I am Arijani, faithful servant of the great Kali and master of this place. How can I be of service to you?"

If the heroes attempt to talk with the image, Arijani will lead the conversation so that he learns as much as he can about the group, their dealings with the Stalkers, and that sort of thing. He will reveal nothing of his own past or powers, although he may lie about any number of things

Should the party attack the image, they will discover that nothing they do will effect it. Again, this illusion is handled almost exactly like the 6th-level wizard spell *project image*.

When the party discovers that they are not facing the real Arijani, the horrible laughter will again return as the image fades away. The same shadows that seemed to spawn Arijani will unleash a new horror in the form of a pair of shadow fiends (see the RAVENLOFT® *Monstrous Compendium*™). One of these appears at the east end of the room and the other at the west, cutting the party off from a quick exit.

Shadow Fiends (2): AL CE; AC 9, 5, or 1; MV 12; HD 7+3; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6, 1d6, 1d8; SA See below; SD See below; MR See below; SZ M; ML 16; XP 2,000 each; Treasure Nil.

In the dim light of this room, the creatures are AC 5 and gain a +1 bonus on their attack rolls. If the room is darkened, the shadow fiends' AC would drop to 1, they would gain a +2 on attack rolls, and any damage done to them would be halved. If the room could be lit brightly, the creatures would be AC 9 and suffer double damage from all attacks that strike them.

Regardless of the lighting around them, the shadow fiends are immune to fire, cold, and electricity of any type. A *light* spell cast directly at the fiends will do 1d6 points of damage to them, but will not continue to provide illumination to the area

On the first round of the battle, the creatures will radiate a magical *fear* that affects everyone within 30 feet. These fiends cannot use their *magic jar* ability as they have not taken the time to ready a receptacle for would-be victims.

Shadow fiends can be turned as *special* undead by clerics and paladins. However, because of the evil aura associated with this place, such attempts are at a –1 penalty.

8. Kali's Pagoda

The walls and ceiling of this vast room are layered with gleaming black enamel that scatters dozens of reflections from every light. Every sound made in this 80 foot by 70 foot chamber seems to echo endlessly.

On the northern wall, opposite the only visible doors in the room, is a tapestry 30 feet wide that stretches from the floor to the ceiling 40 feet above. Apart from the fact that the tapestry depicts a four-armed, female warrior, no details are visible from this distance. Still, there is something intriguing about this great tapestry that seems to capture your imagination, but you cannot say what.

The reflections of the party's torches and lanterns are augmented with a *dancing lights* spell and the echoes of their boots are enhanced with an *audible glamour*, but these minor effects serve no purpose other than to heighten the sense of awe that one should feel in a place sacred to the goddess Kali.

As the party moves deeper into the room, however, more illusions will be activated. After they have crossed about one quarter of the distance to the tapestry or have been in the room for a few seconds, the reflections on the walls will become more sinister, taking on the appearance of gleaming eyes. This is nothing more than a *phantasmal force* spell layered atop the *dancing lights* already present in the room. Anyone taking a good look at the "eyes" will see that they are those of a great cat.

When the party is about halfway across the room, the echoes that they have been making will become more pronounced. Just as the lights became eyes, these sounds become quiet, sinister laughing sounds. One must listen to make the laughter out for what it is, but it is nonetheless nerve-wracking. This, like the eyes, is the result of a second *audible glamour* spell layered atop the first

When the group comes within about 20 feet of the tapestry, they can see it much more clearly; the DM should read the following description:

The fine craftsmanship of the tapestry is now evident. It is a work of great subtlety and patience, rivalling any similar work seen elsewhere.

The focus of the work is a great woman with four arms, long black hair, skin the color of midnight sky, and eyes that glow like emeralds in the night. Both of the right hands hold curving scimitars, while the left hands bear coiled whips.

An ornate border surrounds the woman, depicting various stages of life, from birth to death to rebirth. This cycle is repeated four times and makes an unending chain of images that represents the Sri Rajian emphasis on reincarnation.

At this point, the watchful eyes and endless laughter suddenly vanish. Twin bolts of fire spring from the eyes of the woman in the tapestry, strike the southern wall of the chamber, and explode with a deafening blast. Instantly, the entire southern half of the room becomes a great firestorm that throws out searing waves of heat. Everyone in the room suffers 2d4 points of damage per round (except those immune to fire and heat) long as the firestorm exists. Anyone actually caught within the inferno suffers 3d6 points of damage per round. The flames are illusionary, and can be extinguished only with a *dispel magic* or similar spell. Attempts to smother them with water or other conventional methods will fail.

With a shrill, grating voice, the image on the tapestry begins to speak. This is accomplished via an incantation not unlike a *magic mouth* spell.

"Trespassers, you have entered the most holy shrine of Kali. Here burn the eternal fires of life and death. You are not wanted in this place."

With that, the image of Kali rips itself out of the tapestry, assumes a three dimensional form, and attacks. The monster has the following statistics:

Image of Kali (1): AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 10; hp 65; THAC0 11; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6 (×2), 1d4 (×2); SA Burn & entangle; SD Immune to non-magical attacks; MR Nil; SZ H (20' tall); ML 20; XP 5,000; Treasure Nil.

Each round, the statue may strike up to four times. Two of the attacks are made with flaming swords that have a chance (5% per point of damage inflicted) of igniting anything that they hit. Note that this includes things like metal and pools of water. These flames are magical and can consume anything. However, they cannot spread from one ignited object to another; only the blades can create fire of this type. A person who is wearing armor or clothing that is burning suffers 2d6 points of damage per turn until the armor is removed or the fire burns out. The fire burns out in a number of rounds equal to 10 minus the AC of the armor. Thus, plate takes 8 rounds to burn up while a shield is consumed in only one round. Apart from a *dispel magic* or similar enchantment, it is impossible to quench these flames.

The other two attacks are made with the being's whips. Whenever they hit a victim, there is a 5% chance per point of damage inflicted that the whip entangles its target. At this point, the lash of the whip animates and breaks free. A *bend bars/lift gates* is required to escape from the whip and no action that requires physical movement can be made until the bonds are slipped.

The flames and the image of Kali are actually illusions. If the PCs manage to dispel the illusion or disbelieve in it, they will find that their wounds are all being inflicted by beams of force that flash from the eyes of the tapestry.

Escaping the room is possible only through the doors to the south. Once the illusion of flames has been removed, this is easy enough to do.

The attacks on the party can be halted by the destruction of the tapestry. If ignited, the entire thing will be consumed in 3 rounds. During this time the attacks will continue normally. Once the tapestry is destroyed, all of the illusions in this room will vanish.

Destroying the tapestry will enrage Arijani, for it is among his most prized possessions. If the players opt to do this, he will probably appear to confront them personally. For details describing the confrontation with Arijani, the DM is instructed to read the Room 13 key and adapt it as necessary to Arijani's appearance here.

9. Savitri's Pagoda

This room is roughly 70 feet long and 60 feet wide with six stone pillars supporting a ceiling 40 feet over your heads. The temperature in this room is far hotter than it should be.

Set into the center of the stone tiles that make up the floor is a golden solar disc. It is from this disc that the heat in this room seems to emanate.

This room is sacred to Savitri, the Sri Rajian god of life, light, and healing. Once per week, any person may enter the circle of the sun and receive the benefits of Savitri's embrace. Persons who try to use the god's power more frequently risk angering the god.

Any injured person who stands on the solar disc will be bathed in the healing rays of the sun. This has the effect of restoring all lost hit points, curing blindness, regenerating lost limbs, and eliminating diseases. It will even cure lycanthropy, but has no effect upon Jahed's fraudulent lycanthropic curse (as described in the first part of this adventure).

Those who have no need of healing when they step on this disc will also be bathed in healing rays. For them, the rays have the effect of

rendering that person immune to all disease or sickness for the next seven days.

It is possible to place a dead person on the disk and have him restored to life. The chance of success is equal to 100% minus 5% per hour since that person died. Revived characters are fully healed when raised by Savitri.

Persons who enter the perimeter of the disc more than once in a given week will invoke the wrath of Savitri. The severity of their punishment is based upon the amount of time that has passed since they were last healed. In all cases, magical immunity to flames or heat is of no value in protecting against the will of Savitri.

If less than one hour has passed, the burning rays of the sun will disfigure the violator, leaving his skin charred and blackened. Such characters are so frightful to look upon that their Charisma is permanently dropped to 1/2 its current value. Nothing short of divine intervention can remove these scars and restore the person's Charisma. Every item carried by the hero must save vs. magical fire or be destroyed.

If more than one but fewer than 24 hours have passed, the victim will be burned for 3d10 points of damage. The victim will also be scarred, dropping his Charisma by 1d4 points. Every item carried by the character must save vs. magical fire or be destroyed.

If more that one day has passed, the victim will be burned for 1d10 points of damage. Although he will not be scarred by this attack, he will be rendered immune to all magical healing for 7 days. No form of curative spells will function on the character during that time, although normal healing is possible.

10. Yama's Pagoda

In the center of this 80-foot by 70-foot room is a rectangular pool 40 feet wide and 50 feet long. A pair of gleaming brass doors offer an exit to the north, while a single such door promises access to areas south.

The pool is filled with water that has the fine, shimmering clarity of delicate crystal. Four jets of water rise up from the corners of the pool to splash against the ceiling 40 feet above. Spray from these powerful fountains fills the room with a fine mist and the scent of dew on a spring morning.

The fountains are illusions that cover stone pillars. Likewise, the spray that seems to fill the air is unreal. The fountain itself exists, but it is really a pool filled with deadly acid.

Anyone who touches the acid will be burned for 1d4 points of damage. Jumping into the acid will do 5d4 points of damage and drinking it does 8d4 points. Any large object thrown into the pool will cause the acid to splash, doing 1d4 points of damage to everyone within 10 feet of the point of impact.

As soon as someone attempts to leave the room, an *aerial servant* (as the 6th-level priest's spell) will manifest itself. The servant's only purpose is to throw the person trying to leave into the acid. A maximum of one servant per player character will be present in the room at any one time. As soon as someone escapes the room, the servant that was tracking him vanishes.

It may be possible for the party to bottle some of the acid for later use. If this is done, each vial of acid that is thrown on an enemy will inflict 2d4 points of damage.

11. Varuna's Pagoda

You have entered a room that is 60 feet long and 40 feet wide. Unlike the other rooms you have explored, this chamber is open to the sky. The air in this place is cool and refreshing, a nice change from the thick atmosphere within the temple.

Beyond the featureless walls, you can see the night sky and the stars beyond. A bright comet trailing a brilliant blue tail hangs almost directly overhead, pouring an unusual azure light down upon you.

The sky overhead and the blue comet are all illusions. The ceiling of this room is really featureless black stone.

Shortly after the party enters this room, they see a shooting star race across the sky. This will be followed by another and another. Soon the sky will be dotted with a beautiful shower of meteors. This stellar display is captivating to watch and has the same effect as a *hypnotic pattern* spell. A save versus spells will negate this effect.

Anyone who is unaffected by the meteors will notice that the temperature in this room has been dropping rapidly. Within a single round, it has become so cold that the character's breath will leaving steaming clouds in the air around them.

Then, without warning, an *ice storm* erupts from the illusionary heavens. It will remain in effect as long as even a single character stays in the room, doing 3d10 points of damage each round. While the stars and the night sky may be illusions, the *ice storm* is not. The PCs will save versus spells for 1/2 damage.

12. Brahman's Pagoda

This room is roughly 40 feet wide and 50 feet long. A pair of brass doors gleam on both the western and eastern walls. In the center of this room, a marble pedestal rises up 10 feet into the air.

Perched atop the pedestal is a great egg cast from solid gold. It is easily 15 feet thick and 25 feet long. Light glinting from the polished egg has an almost hypnotic effect upon you, making it hard for you to look away from this unimaginable treasure.

The door to the west is an exit from the temple. It is hidden on the outside by magic, but not on this side. It is possible that the PCs have entered this room directly from the outside through the western door, but that is unlikely.

Anyone examining the egg will discover that it is exactly what it appears to be. This is an ancient relic sacred to the followers of Brahman; Arijani came into possession of it several years ago. He displays it as a show of his power, but treats it with a great deal of caution, for he has no idea what powers it might possess or how to invoke them.

In order to protect the item (and possibly himself), Arijani has encased it in an enhanced *globe of invulnerability* (same as the 6th-level wizard spell). As long as the globe remains intact, no one can come within 10 feet of the egg. Magic below the 5th level will have no effect on the globe. A *dispel magic* is the only way to collapse the globe.

Should the globe be defeated, a *forcecage* will spring to life around the room, blocking off the exits. While the intruders are held at bay by this magic, Arijani will send a number of his assassins to deal with them.

Should the PCs manage to remove the egg (which is highly unlikely because of its size and incredible weight), they will be unable to take it back to their homeworld with them. If they attempt to escape Sri Raji with the egg, it will not be with them when they return to their homes. Rather, the egg will return to its homeworld, the planet where Sri Raji itself originated.

13. Arijani's Quarters

You have entered a chamber 50 feet long by 40 feet wide. Fine silk tapestries adorn the walls and rich furs form a sleeping area in the center of the room.

A large, golden throne stands against the southern wall of the room. Seated upon this great throne is an elegantly dressed creature that looks like a cross between a man and a tiger. His clothes are fashioned of the finest silk and a large, golden hookah smolders by his side. As you enter, the beast draws deeply on the water pipe and smiles, showing the keen, deadly teeth of a great cat.

"Welcome strangers," he says as he exhales a long cone of smoke. "My name is Arijani. On behalf of the Dark Sisters and Black Mother herself, I bid you welcome to Mahakala. I must say, you have certainly come a long way to find your deaths."

As he speaks, the cloud of pipe smoke rolls toward the adventurers. It quickly darkens and thickens until it becomes a *stinking cloud* that engulfs the characters. After the characters have made their saving throws, they can attempt to battle the dark lord. There are a number of important points to keep in mind during this battle.

Ravana's Bane

Arijani may not know that they have recovered *Ravana's Bane* (if they have). If this is the case, he will be very vulnerable to an attack with that artifact. The DM needs to pay special attention to this possibility. After all, if the PCs just kick open the door, snap off a shot, and destroy Arijani outright, that's not much of a climax. The first shot that the characters make with this weapon *must not* reach its target.

If the player's attack roll is bad, then there's no problem. The bolt will just sail past the rakshasa and embed itself in the stone wall behind him or in his throne. In either case, the PCs will need to make an attempt to recover the weapon and take another shot with it. Arijani will make that a difficult task.

If the player's attack roll is in the mid-range (that is, not an obvious miss but not an obvious hit) the DM should announce that the bolt has delivered a glancing blow to the rakshasa. This ought to do the normal damage for a *blessed* crossbow bolt, but will not kill him outright. Again, the PCs will need to recover the projectile and get another shot off

If the roll is clearly a hit, the DM ought to toss a couple of percentile dice, look at them with some surprise, and announce that Arijani snatches the bolt from midair just as it was about to strike him. Then, with a sinister laugh, he can toss the weapon aside and attack.

Spellcasting

There's a lot more to Arijani than simple claws and teeth. He looks upon physical combat as an entertaining distraction. In an actual fight (like this one), he makes full use of his magical powers.

After tossing the *stinking cloud* spell at the PCs from his magical hookah, Arijani will follow up with a *color spray* or *fear* spell. Once he feels that his spells have softened up the enemy enough, he'll move in and rip them apart physically.

It is important to remember that Arijani has healing spells as well. He won't hesitate to use these when he is hurt.

Pacing and Theatrics

As stated above, the DM needs to keep in mind the fact that this is the most important part of the module. It needs to be treated with drama and a fast pace. Arijani ought to be seen as an almost unstoppable force who is brought down in the end only by a great stroke of luck.

Of course, the DM has to be pretty careful here. He needs to slap the heroes around solidly, leaving the survivors of the battle battered and

broken even in victory. Once the fight is over, the DM should flip to the next section of the book, *After the Battle*

14. Gallery

This area is "T"-shaped with gleaming brass doors offering exits to the north, south, and east. A column of fire rises up through a circular hole in the floor and splashes across the stone ceiling 10 feet above, filling the room with hot, smoky air.

There is nothing unusual in this room. As described in Room 5, there is a staircase in the center of the flames that leads down from here, but it is masked with an illusion

Anyone who is in the room will take 1d4 points of damage from the intense heat and those who come within 10 feet of the flames will suffer 2d4 points of damage. Anyone making direct contact with the pillar of fire will be horribly burned for 2d6+9 points of damage

In the center of the fire is a spiral staircase that leads down through a hole in the floor and into Room 5. An illusion makes it impossible to see the stairs within the flames. If someone attempts to disbelieve in the fire and succeeds, they will be able see the staircase.

Descending the stairs is easy enough if some way can be found to negate the effects of the flames. The Dark Sisters all use magical means for this purpose. If someone attempts to dash down the stairs while the flames are still able to affect him, he will suffer two rounds of exposure (a total of 4d6+18 points of damage).

15. Murder Holes

This room is 40 feet wide by 50 feet long and is utterly devoid of interesting features. The walls are common stone, cracked and chipped with the passage of time. The floor is tiled with squares of slate, and the ceiling is like the walls.

This room is positioned above room 4 and has an invisible floor through which that room can be seen. However, the area is hidden with a *vacancy* spell so that it appears empty.

A number of Dark Sisters are hiding in here, each cloaked with an *invisibility* spell. They will wait until the party is vulnerable (or until they are discovered) and then attack with knotted cords in an attempt to strangle the adventurers. There is one Dark Sister assassin per member of the party. Their strangling attack will be resolved with the rules on "holding your breath" in the "Time and Movement" section of the *Player's Handbook*

5th-level Dark Sister Assassin: AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 ; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1; SA thief abilities; SD thief abilities; SZ M; ML Elite (14-15); XP 500; Treasure Nil; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13.
Thief Skills: PP 65%; OL 62%; F/RT 50%; MS 55%; HS 46%; HN 20%; CW 90%; KL 25%; BS (+4 attack, 3×damage).

When the assassins strike, they must make a normal attack roll (with their backstabbing bonus) to loop their cords around the target's neck. Once this is done, the victim will be unable to breathe. If the victim is unable to break free within a number of rounds equal to 1/4 of his Constitution score (or a minimum of 1 round), he must begin to make Constitution checks each round or pass out. The first roll is made unmodified. Each roll after the first is made with a cumulative –2 penalty. Once that check is failed, the victim will die if unable to breath on the next round.

Any victim who avoids the assassin's cord or escapes from the deadly loop will be attacked with a sword instead. This is far less pleasing to Kali, but her followers will make do.

If the *vacancy* spell is defeated, the player characters will see the floor for what it is. A careful search of the room's invisible floor will reveal the holes described in Room 4.

16. Balcony

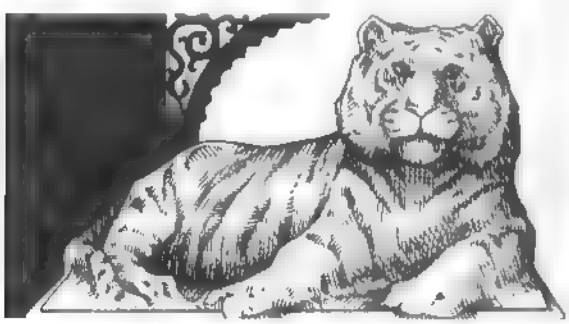
This is balcony overlooks a vast chamber 100 feet long and 60 feet wide. Ten square pillars of stone set with ornate traces of silver rise from the ground floor 20 feet below, past the balcony, and on upward to merge with a ceiling 20 feet above you. Brilliantly polished brass doors offer an exit from the balcony to the west. Similar portals provide exits to the west and east on the lower level.

The walls of this room are covered with gleaming, black tiles and mosaics that make it look as if you are standing on a hill in the center of low, sprawling city. The ceiling has been painted black and studded with gems, so that the entire place has the look a peaceful night. A large, bronze hemisphere has been set in the center of the ceiling, radiating a light that looks like that of a full moon.

The lower half of this room is described as Room 5. If the PCs have come here directly from that point, then this room is empty and has no encounter in it.

If they have come here from the gallery, then a new series of spells has been woven about the room After the party members have had a few seconds to look around, a series of *Evard's black tentacles* spells will be invoked beneath their feet. There will be one cluster of tentacles per character. Because these appear without warning, it is quite correct for the DM to call for fear checks at this time

Once the party deals with these rubbery assailants, they are free to continue their exploration of the temple.



17. Arijani's Little Joke

You step into a room that is 80 feet long and 80 feet wide. The room is well-lit so there are no shadows throughout; every aspect of the room is clearly visible. A soft, warm light seems to radiate from the ceiling continuously. Four square stone pillars support the ceiling that is 40 feet above your heads. Each of the pillars is decorated with tile mosaics of man-like beings; they appear to be creatures from myth and nightmare.

In the center of the room a bubbling fountain splashes softly into a small pool about 20' in diameter. The walls are covered with decorative tapestries embroidered with depictions of Sri Rajian flora and fauna, much like that which you have passed through in the jungles surrounding Bahru. These wall coverings lend a comforting feeling to the room

This room appears not to have escaped the passage of time. Unlike the other rooms in the temple, the double bronze doors to the north, south, east, and west are not gleaming and pristine, but dull and battered, seemingly scarred by numerous blows. The tapestries appear to be of ancient date as well, and the mosaics on the pillars have lost many of their tiles. Indeed, these mosaics also appear to have been attacked by various types of weapons.

The only outstanding feature of this room is the pervasive peace and quiet that reigns here.

This room is exactly what it appears to be, a well-lit room with tapestries and a fountain. Arijani has worked no illusions here, nested or otherwise. There are no traps, nothing at all that can harm the PCs. However, the DM is encouraged to describe the room with an air of mystery, just to keep the players guessing.

Indeed, this is the "little joke" that Arijani is playing on intruders in his temple. Given the diabolic, illusionary nature of every other room in this place, the dark lord thought it would be

humorous to confront visitors with a perfectly normal room, just to see how they would react. The DM can enjoy the "joke" as well and should not give any hint that the room is harmless. The PCs should be allowed to attempt to disbelieve or dispel anything here until they come to the conclusion that this area will actually provide them something of a safe haven for a short while.

Again, there are no illusions here. The fountain is filled with clean, pure water that the PCs may drink without harm. The tapestries are normal, and no part of them will spring to life and attack the party. The light overhead is from a permanent *continuous light* spell cast on the ceiling. It can be dispelled by a *dispel magic* spell. This will leave the players in the dark if they have no other means of light with them, but nothing in the room will hurt them, dark or light.

The mosaics on the pillars are the most threatening part of the room. If the PCs approach the pillars, the DM should read the following

> The manlike creatures depicted on the pillars are indeed horrific. On two of the pillars are represented evil-looking beings that walk like men but have mauve-colored skin and heads of an octopus. Four tentacles extend from where the mouths should be. The other two pillars bear the tile resemblances of tall, pale men dressed in dark, flowing robes. Their faces are deathly white and tiny fangs protrude from beneath their sallow lips. A tiny trickle of blood seems to drip down from the fangs.

The mosaics are absolutely harmless. They are not illusions that will become animate, neither are they any kind of golem. They are just mosaics of mind flayers and vampires. Again, Arijani continues the joke. That many previous intruders in the temple have been fooled by these depictions is evidenced by the scars left on the pillars from numerous attacks.

The DM should not allow the party to stay here too long.

After the Battle

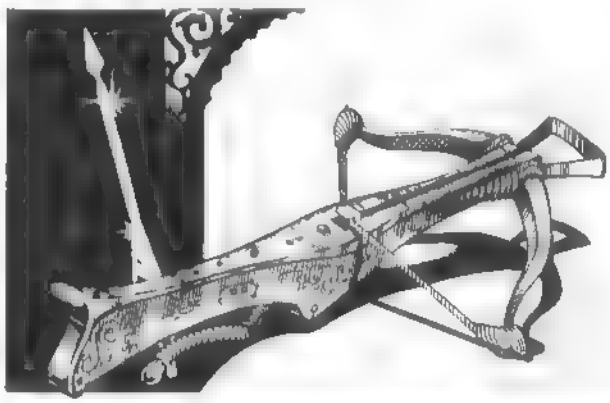
It is assumed that once the fight with Arijani is over, the rakshasa will be dead. If this isn't the case, then the heroes are most certainly dead. Even if they flee from Arijani, he and his Dark Sisters will make sure that they do not escape the Accursed City alive.

As soon as the final blow is struck, probably from the silver crossbow bolt (*Ravana's Bane*), Arijani will stagger back, clutch at the weapon buried in his flesh, and fall to the ground dead. When this happens, the domain of Sri Raji will no longer have any reason to exist. Recognizing this, the dark powers will allow it to be consumed by the mists. As the PCs stand triumphant over the body of their foe, everything around them will begin to boil away into fog.

After a few seconds of this, they will find themselves suspended in an endless cloud of billowing grey mists. They have no way of knowing which direction is north, south, east, or west

If they stand still long enough, they begin to draw the attention of the mist horrors (see the RAVENLOFT® *Monstrous Compendium*™). The presence of these foul creatures ought to be enough to get them moving.

Where their footsteps take them at this point is up to the Dungeon Master. If he wishes to send them on another mission in Ravenloft, then they will emerge from the fog in some other domain. If this adventure was being used as an aside from a regular AD&D® campaign, then they will eventually find that they have returned to their homes.



THE DOMAIN OF SRI RAJI

Sri Raji is a land of steaming jungles filled with deadly predators. Those brave enough to explore the tropical wilds of this dark land will find themselves facing savage tigers, giant leeches, carnivorous plants, and giant insects.

In a few places, men have fought back the jungle and its horrors, carving enclaves of civilization from the looming body of the wilds. Life in these crowded cities is far from safe, however. A rigid caste system ensures that the lowest classes have no hope of a better life. This being the case, they often turn to thievery and crime in an attempt to find relief from the misery of their daily lives. Pockets of disease, violence, and evil are everywhere.

As appalling as these dangers are, they pale in comparison to the horror at the heart of this domain: Arijani, Maharajah of the Rakshasa.

The Land

Sri Raji is a domain of endless jungle. By day, the steaming wilderness is alive with the growl of predators, the shrieks of hunted animals, and the buzzing of blood-drinking, disease-carrying insects. Temperatures during the day hover around one hundred degrees with little seasonal variation.

As the sun reaches the horizon, black clouds race to fill the sky and thunder rolls across the land. Dusk in Sri Raji almost always brings a great downpour accompanied by a tremendous display of lightning and cacophonous thunder. Shortly after the sun has set, the storm passes as quickly as it formed.

At night, the temperature falls to a more comfortable level, but the terrors of the jungle are doubled. Beneath the endless black of the sky, giant bats waft through the trees and ravenous plants lie in wait. It is worth noting that there is no moon in Sri Raji, so night in the jungles of this domain is a time of absolute blackness.

In four places in Sri Raji, humanity has managed to fight back the ever-advancing foliage and carve out settlements. Three of these enclaves of civilization are the villages of Pakat, Tvashsti, and Muladi. The fourth is the Accursed City of Bahru with the temple-home of Arijani at its heart.

Tvashsti

Although it is home to nearly two thousand people, Tvashsti is the smallest of Sri Raji's cities. It is built on the western banks of the Damuhm, or *River of Blood*, and rests in the center of a seemingly endless rice paddy. The majority of the people living in the city are either farmers or fishermen. By day they work outside the city, but at night they return to the safety of Tvashsti's stone walls

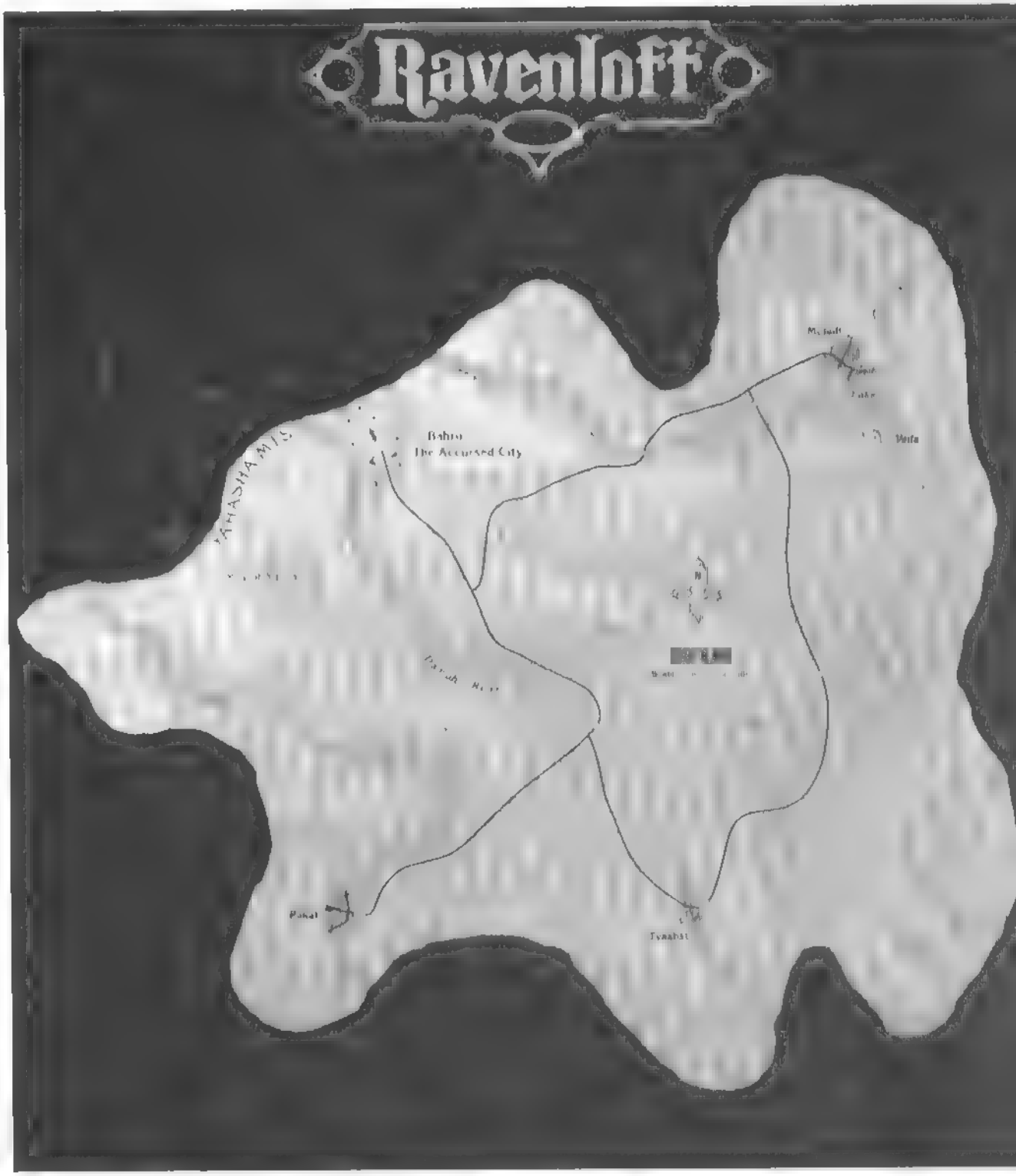
Life in the city is better than it is in either Pakat or Muladi. Although Tvashsti is crowded at night, it is far less crowded during the day.

At the center of the city is a great temple dedicated to the god Tvashtri, the Sri Rajian god of science and technology. The buildings around the temple comprise a great university, for nothing is more valued in Tvashsti than knowledge and intelligence.

Pakat

The second largest city in Sri Raji is Pakat. Like the other towns in the domain, it is ringed by a series of rice paddies. However, the jungle around Pakat is far more savage than it is elsewhere in Sri Raji. Numerous predators and carnivorous plants make it much harder to keep the wilds from reclaiming the lands that farmers have cleared. Thus, the amount of farm land around Pakat is quite small. When this fact is combined with the large population of the city (nearly 3,500), it produces a general shortage of food. Poverty in Pakat is widespread, as is disease and suffering.

THE DOMAIN OF SRI RAJI



Travelers who come to the city from Tvashsti are often appalled by the squalor they find here.

Near the center of the city is a temple dedicated to the Sri Rajian goddess Ratri. While this was once a splendid place, the pressures of keeping the city's people alive have caused the city to shunt resources away from the temple's upkeep. Thus, the building has fallen into disrepair. A small staff of priests, lead by a high priestess, still live in the temple and do their best to maintain it, but they seem to have little success.

What isn't generally known is that a vast underground complex has been built beneath the temple. This second temple is dedicated to Siva, the goddess of destruction. Ratri withdrew her support from the crumbling building decades ago, and the priests of Siva moved in. They slaughtered Ratri's followers and built their own temple. Those who come to worship here do not realize that they are actually paying homage to a goddess of destruction and anarchy.

Muladi

Muladi, with its crushing population of nearly 8,000, is by far the largest city in Sri Raji Although hunger is not a problem in Muladi, crime and violence are.

This great city is built on the shores of Lake Veda and, like Tvashsti and Pakat, is ringed by a network of rice paddies. Because the lake water is badly tainted, the rice crop is seldom good. Further, plagues of parasites and waves of disease seem to sweep through the paddies with uncanny regularity. Because of this, the major component of the Muladian diet is fish and seaweed.

The cultural center of the city is on the waterfront where a large temple has been built to the goddess Rudri. While it is certain that much of the misfortune that befalls the farmers of Muladi is due to the influence of Rudri, the people feel that they owe the goddess a great debt of thanks. They are constantly assured by the priests of Rudri that the jungles around the city and the depths of the lake are filled with monsters. If not for the mercy of Rudri, they profess, the city would be overwhelmed by nameless horrors.

Bahru, the Accursed City

The northwestern regions of Sri Raji are dominated by the towering mass of Mount Yamatali. It rises nearly 1,000 feet above the jungle canopy below, vanishing into the ever swirling mists that border the domain. Near the top of the great mountain, an artificial plateau has been carved from the living stone and a great metropolis built.

This is the city of Bahru, at the heart of which dwells the dread Arijani in his foul temple of Kali. The city itself lies in ruins, having been consumed long ago by the virulent fronds of the jungle. No men live within the city, for it is awash with the frightening terrors of the ravenous jungle. Rumors abound of great wealth, but none are foolish enough to travel to this dread place in search of that wealth.

As has been mentioned, the city of Bahru spreads out from a central park in which stands Arijani's temple. The general populace of Sri Raji knows that this temple is primarily devoted to the worship of Kali, the Black Mother, and that it is a place of evil. By the same token, they have accepted the power of that deity over their daily lives and hold her in great awe. Arijani is known to live in this temple, along with a staff of priestesses who venerate Kali. None outside of the temple know that he is a rakshasa.

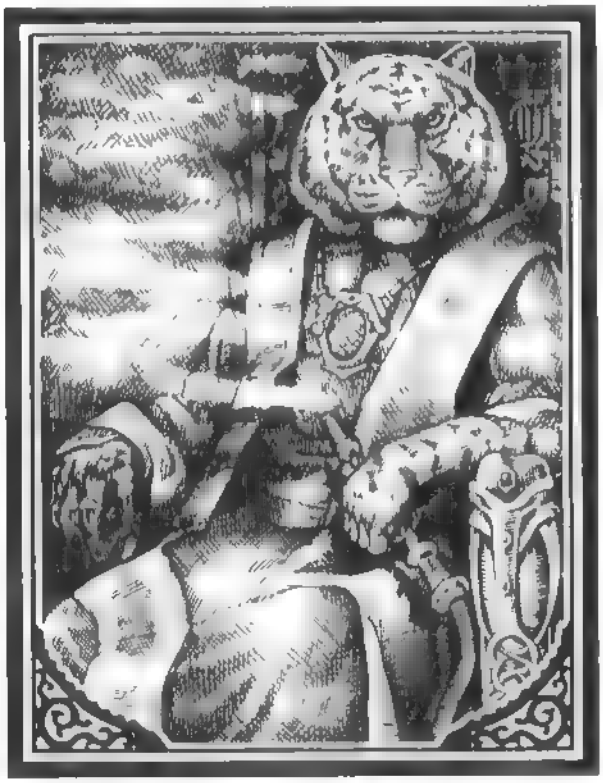
The Chosen of Kali

In order to satisfy his hunger for human flesh, Arijani must devour one person per day. He sees to this need by having the villagers select one of their number to come before him. The "honor" of sending a person to the temple is awarded to a different city each day.

The means by which a person is chosen varies in each city. In Tvashsti, the priests of the temple have constructed a mechanical device that randomly selects a citizen to be so honored. In Pakat, the high priestess of Ratri enters a trance each day at midnight. During this trance, she casts a *commune* spell and learns the name of the person to be sent before Arijani. Lastly, in the great city of Muladi, a citizen (often an enemy of the temple) is selected at the whim of the high priest of Rudri.

The person chosen leaves his or her home at dawn, riding in a grand howdah on the back of mighty albino elephant. The pachyderm and its passenger reach the temple roughly at noon, no matter which city it departs from. Throughout the afternoon the visitor is pampered and cared for by the priestesses of the temple, who do everything they can to make the potential victim happy. As the evening clouds roll in, the chosen one is brought to the pagoda of Kali. Here, he learns the true nature of his host and, as the evening thunderstorm showers the domain, is quickly consumed in a gruesome frenzy

On those rare days when an evening downpour does not occur, the victim is deemed to have some importance to Kali and is released. Such fortunates return to the streets of their home city and have no memory of what happened to them in the temple. They are believed by the general populace to have received special instruction from Kali and are treated with the utmost reverence thereafter. When this occurs, Arijani is forced to feed upon one of the priestesses, who gladly give up their lives for the honor of sustaining him.



The people of Sri Raji's cities believe that those who go to the temple and do not return have been taken by Kali and passed on to the next life. In Sri Raji, belief in reincarnation is absolute. Thus, they see death as merely the start of another life. If that rebirth comes at the hands of the gods, then the individual will be blessed with a life of great splendor and happiness.

The Caste System

The people of Sri Raji are grouped into social classes known as castes. There is no progression from one caste to another, since the position that a person holds is based on birth and is assumed to be an aspect of his past lives. Individuals who disgrace themselves or earn great honor will be punished or rewarded in their next life. While this might be hard for outsiders to understand, the people of Sri Raji accept it as a given.

Many factors about a person's birth affect his placement in this hierarchy, including wealth, religious piety, and locale. There are countless castes, and the odds are that no outsider will ever be able to fully decipher the complex process by which a person's place in society is established.

Everyone in Sri Raji will judge outsiders as if they had been born into the caste system. Thus, it is important to know where a player character falls in their eyes. Think of Caste as an ability score like Strength or Wisdom and roll the dice for each player character to determine what their caste is.

Caste Names

The character's numeric caste rating determines which of the four castes he belongs to. The rating is used to determine status within one's caste. Thus, a member of the Brahmin (highest) caste with a 17 score is subordinate to a member of the same caste with an 18 or 19 score.

Any character with 17 or more caste points is a member of the **Brahmin** caste. This group consists mainly of priests, but also sometimes great heroes. Most people in Sri Raji have never

met someone from so honorable a caste. These people are certainly favored by the gods.

A character with 14 to 16 caste points is a member of the **Kshatriya**. This is the traditional caste of the nobles and heroes of Sri Raji. As a rule, there are only a handful of people in any city that fall into this class.

Those with 9 to 13 caste points are members of the **Vaishya** caste. The common folk, merchants, craftsmen, and so forth, fall into this class. Most player characters will fall into this category.

Those with 8 or fewer points are classed as **Shudra**. These poor folk are the absolute bottom of the social ladder in Sri Raji. They include farmers and others upon whom society depends but who are, in the eyes of their betters, easily replaced.

Reincarnation

Unlike the people of other lands who often fear death, the Sri Rajian populace see it as simply another part of life. They are adamant in their belief that life is constantly being renewed. Someone who lives a good life will be reborn to a better one. Someone who is less true and faithful will be reborn in a lesser position.

The only way to escape this endless cycle of reincarnation is to achieve a complete understanding of the universe and a unity with the gods themselves. On so doing, the cycle is broken and the death of the body releases the spirit to join the enlightened of Nirvana

Secret Societies of Sri Raji

Beneath the surface of a generally peaceful and happy life in Sri Raji lies a sea of torment. Rumors abound that there are countless factions and secret cults working to attain mysterious ends that none outside of their order can fathom. Much of the speculation is incorrect, but there are some elements of truth.

The Dark Sisters

Perhaps the most powerful of Sri Raji's secret organizations, this cult of Kali is a tool of the dark lord Arijani. From his temple in the ruined city of Bahru, he sends them out to do his bidding. At the time of this adventure, they are primarily occupied with finding *Ravana's Bane*.

The Dark Sisters are also under orders to report the arrival of any outsiders to Arijani at once. Although they do not know it, such people have the power to destroy their master. Arijani's response to the arrival of outsiders is simply to order them killed, a task that the Dark Sisters are perfectly capable of carrying out.

The head of this order is Mahiji, Arijani's mother. As the high priestess of Kali, her power is great enough to deal with almost any threat. A woman of absolute evil, Mahiji certainly rivals her son for the role of Dark Lord in Sri Raji. Still, she is utterly devoted to her faith and her son.

The Stalkers

As has been stated, there are no rakshasa in Sri Raji other than the lord of the domain, Ravana, however, is not without his influence here.

Long ago, a stranger named Jahed came into the domain. He had the dark skin of the natives, but his hair was orange and his eyes green. None had ever seen his kind before, and they feared him wherever he went.

Jahed was hunted by the Dark Sisters, but escaped into the jungles and vanished without a trace. It was assumed that he had fallen prey to the deadly perils of the Sri Rajian wilds.

However, he survived the wilds and prospered. As dangerous as the jungle was, Jahed was more deadly for he was a weretiger. In time, he created others of his kind and gradually drifted into the clutches of evil. Eventually, he and his followers fell under the influence of Ravana.

At first, they kept to themselves. From time to time they would attack caravans and raid the camps of travellers, but for the most part they remained secluded in the wilds of the jungle.

All the while Jahed was carrying out Ravana's plans for revenge. As an outsider, he would be able to harm Arijani. It only remained for Jahed and his Stalkers to find the holy *Ravana's Bane* so that the rakshasa's destruction could be assured.

Arijani

13th-level Illusionist, 9th-level Priest, Rakshasa, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	–5	Str	15
Movement	18	Dex	20
Hit Dice	13+39	Con	18
Hit Points	130	Int	21
THAC0	7	Wis	20
No. of Attacks	3	Cha	12
Damage/Attack	1-8/1-8/2-12		
Special Attacks	See below		
Special Defenses	See below		
Magic Resistance	See below		

Wizard Spells: *Color spray, light, audible glamour*, phantasmal force*, taunt, unseen servant; darkness 15 radius, fog cloud, blindness*, blur*, invisibility*, Tasha's hideous uncontrollable laughter; haste, flame arrow, suggestion, clairvoyance, spectral force*, monster summoning I; fear*, rainbow pattern*, polymorph other, magic mirror, transmute rock to mud, advanced illusion*, dream*, demi-shadow monsters*, major creation*; permanent illusion*, programmed illusion*, project image*.*

Priest Spells: *Curse, cause light wounds* (×2), *cure light wounds* (×2) *command, cause fear; hold person* (×3), *enthrall* (×3), *chant; create food & water, cause blindness or deafness, feign death, prayer; cloak of fear* (×2), *cause serious wounds* (×3); *flame strike*

Description: Arijani is a powerfully built humanoid that looks like a cross between a man and a tiger. He stands just over 7 feet tall and weighs nearly 325 pounds. His body is covered with the orange and black fur of the great cat and his eyes burn with the cool fire of perfectly cut emeralds. Arijani's every move is both graceful and dangerous, providing ample proof that he is indeed a deadly predator.

Like all rakshasa, Arijani is able to magically disguise himself with an almost perfect *illusion*. In other rakshasa, a natural form of *ESP* governs this change, allowing the rakshasa to appear as someone harmless or friendly to those around them, but Arijani, like all of Ravenloft's dark lords, lives under a curse and must assume a form that will be hated or feared by those around him. Because of this, the rakshasa seldom uses his *illusion* ability, except to create terror and fear in his victims.

No matter what form he takes, Arijani always appears in the finest of clothes and is clearly a member of the highest caste. To him, there is never cause to appear as anyone of a lower social class. His pride makes it impossible for him to pass himself off as anything less than a creature of great nobility.

Background: Arijani makes his home in a temple high on the slopes of the Yamasha Mountains. For miles in every direction around this temple stretch the ruins of an ancient city. Long ago, Sri Raji was part of another land. In those days, this city was a thriving metropolis known as Bahru. Bahru was the beating heart of a great empire that spanned hundreds of miles. It is in that ancient time and forgotten city that Arijani's story begins

Arijani's mother, Mahiji, was not a rakshasi (as females rakshasa are called) but a human. As the high priestess of Kali's temple in Bahru, Mahiji was a very powerful person. She was known and feared far and wide for her power and cruel cunning.

One day, a traveling assassin came to Mahiji's temple. He was taken in by the priestess, who planned to use his deadly skills to further her own aims. Gradually, the two became lovers, bound by a common thread of evil and a fiery passion that could not be extinguished. Despite their torrid affair, the assassin never revealed anything of his past.

It wasn't long before Mahiji became pregnant. When the assassin learned of the impending birth, he went berserk. Mahiji was nearly killed, but managed to escape thanks to the powers granted her by Kali. The assassin was never seen again, but his nature became apparent when the child was born.

Arijani was clearly the spawn of a rakshasa. Numerous divination spells cast by Mahiji revealed to her that the assassin had been an avatar of Ravana, the rakshasa deity—her child, Arijani, was the son of a god.

Mahiji was horrified at the thought that her actions might be seen as a failure in her devotion to Kali. In order to make amends for her actions, she took the bestial child to the altar and prepared to offer it up to Kali. But, when she arrived, Mahiji found a dark figure standing before the altar. As she neared the stranger, it cast off the ebony shroud that cloaked it and revealed itself as a beautiful woman with four arms, a dark complexion, and eyes that burned like hot coals. Mahiji fell to her knees before this avatar of Kali, her goddess

To Mahiji's surprise, the goddess was not displeased. Rather, it seemed that her actions had been according to some dark plan of the Black Mother. She gave the child into the care of the avatar and watched in wonder as the figure melted into the shadows.

The avatar of Kali took the child and found it a home in the rakshasa community of Bahru. Normally, having a father of such great power and stature like Ravana would have insured Arijani a place among the most prestigious of rakshasa. However, the lowly status of his mother (in the eyes of the rakshasa) made him an object of ridicule and scorn.

At an early age, Arijani began to cultivate the seed of hate that his parentage had planted within him. As the years passed, the contempt that he felt for the rest of his kind became all consuming. He began to manifest powers unlike those found in any of his peers, no doubt the direct result of his half-breed nature. Keeping these abilities secret, he began to plot against his kinsmen.

At first, Arijani's actions were subtle. He would arrange for those rakshasa going among men to be discovered by them and destroyed. Gradually, the fearsome rakshasa became the hunted of Bahru instead of the hunters. Because of their intensely fraternal society, they could not conceive of a traitor among their number and Arijani was able to continue his campaign without suspicion. It wasn't long before the rakshasa feared to hunt the humans.

Finally, the rakshasa vowed to take back the night. They moved *en masse* against humanity. For nearly a week, the streets of Bahru were red with the blood of men and women. The rakshasa, overcome with a wild blood frenzy, killed every inhabitant of the city. The humans did not die without a fight, though. Dozens of rakshasa were slaughtered by the men of Bahru.

In the end, the great metropolis was left a burning, shattered ruin. From a tower overlooking the city, Arijani watched the carnage and laughed.

Ravana was appalled by his son's actions. He saw Kali's hand in what had been done but recognized that his power was not sufficient for him to challenge the Black Mother herself. Still, he could not allow the slaughter of his followers to go unpunished.

Ravana sent his avatar to destroy Arijani, but Arijani was ready for this. He lured the avatar into a temple dedicated to Kali. There, in the very room where he was born, he turned on the avatar. With the help of his mother, he tricked the avatar into a position of vulnerability and moved against him.

In an effort to save his life, the avatar offered to grant Arijani a *divine wish*. The half-breed accepted, calling upon Ravana to make him invulnerable to attacks by rakshasa (including Ravana himself) for all time. The avatar agreed, but insisted that Arijani vow to free him and forsake his crusade against the other rakshasa. Arijani promised and the wish was granted.

Unlike Ravana, Arijani was not a creature of his word. Laughing at his father's foolish trust, he destroyed the avatar with a specially *blessed* silver crossbow bolt known as *Ravana's Bane*.

With this final act of treachery, Arijani sealed his fate. As his head was thrown back in maniacal laughter, the smoke from the burning city swirled about the temple, gradually becoming the voracious mists of Ravenloft.

Combat: Arijani has a natural ability known as *masquerade*. This is a combination of *ESP* and *illusion* that is used by most rakshasa to assume

a form that their victims will trust. As a prisoner of Ravenloft, however, Arijani's power has been perverted. When he attempts to *masquerade*, he invariably assumes a shape that is frightening and horrible to his victim.

At first, Arijani cursed the fact that he had lost one of the most potent hunting skills of his race. In time, however, he began to savor the new power and to seek greater control over it. Now, Arijani can effect three variations on the *masquerade* power.

The first of these allows Arijani to take on a form that is drawn from the deepest nightmares of his victim. This image is so terrible that any person confronting Arijani while the rakshasa is in this form must make an immediate Horror Check.

The second variation of this power is used to assume the shape of a victim's greatest enemy. This image is drawn from the conscious mind of the victim and plays upon the rational fears of the subject rather than those of his subconscious. The impact of this illusion is so great that the victim must make a Fear Check at once.

The final variant permits Arijani to mask his true nature, but does not permit him to earn the trust of his victim. When this power is used, he takes on a humanoid form of his own design However pleasing the new form might be, though, it gives off subliminal signs that cause those around it to be distrustful or even hateful of it. Arijani seldom uses this power, for he feels that it is far inferior, even weak and useless, compared to the other two.

In physical combat, Arijani makes use of the deadly natural weapons of his race. Each round he may lash out with his claws, striking twice for 1d6 points of damage, and deliver a fierce bite that inflicts 1d10 points of damage. Arijani never uses artificial weapons.

As a priest of Kali, he is a skilled assassin and can Move Silently and Hide In Shadows like a ranger (56% and 70%, respectively). He uses these skills to set up ambushes and strike with surprise, although he does not gain the thief's backstabbing ability from such attacks.

Arijani can be harmed only by +3 or better magical weapons. Any weapon below +5 inflicts only half damage when used against him. Like all rakshasa, Arijani is unusually vulnerable to crossbows. Such weapons need not be magical to harm him and do their normal damage regardless of magical bonuses. *Blessed* crossbows, while not instantly fatal to Arijani, will always inflict maximum damage to him. *Ravana's Bane*, the crossbow bolt that Arijani used to slay his father's avatar, is rumored to be somewhere In Sri Raji. Many believe that a hit from this projectile would instantly kill Arijani, but none have ever tested this theory.

However, Arijani is immune to all damage caused by a native of his domain or another rakshasa. Thus, only an outsider presents any threat to him. Because of this virtual invulnerability, Arijani tends to be overconfident in battle. His arrogance will one day be his undoing.

Arijani's high Wisdom score makes him immune to many spells. The exact spells are listed on the Wisdom ability tables in the *Player's Handbook*. Further, his Intelligence score makes him immune to all illusions of 1st to 3rd level. Because he is an Illusionist, all of Arijani's spells impose a minimum penalty of –1 to the saving throws of those who witness them. In addition, any illusions used against Arijani, and to which he is not totally immune, are saved against with a +1 bonus.

As a rule, Arijani uses a mixture of illusions, physical attacks, and combat spells to keep his opponents off guard. He is well aware that others will expect him to use numerous illusions to protect himself. Thus, he often mixes up his tactics. In some cases, he even forgoes the use of illusions altogether, leaving his enemies attempting to disbelieve things that are too deadly and real.

Current Sketch: Arijani has adopted his mother's faith since his imprisonment in Ravenloft. It is his belief that he has been trapped in this strange realm by the will of Ravana and he sees the power of Kali as his only chance of escape.

Arijani seldom leaves his temple on the slopes of Mount Yamatali. When he does, it is only to

hunt strangers who have come into the Accursed City surrounding his home. He does this for sport, taking great joy in the fear that he sows before he strikes.

The lord keeps a careful watch over all that goes on in his domain through the eyes and ears of the Dark Sisters. Because he knows that *Ravana's Bane* is still somewhere within the domain and that it has the power to destroy him, he spends a great deal of time attempting to locate this artifact.

Jahed

Weretiger, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	3	Str	16
Movement	12	Dex	17
Level/HD	6+2	Con	15
Hit Points	42	Int	15
THAC0	15	Wis	13
No. Att	3	Cha	12
Dam/Att	1d4/1d4/1d12		
Special Att	Rake		
Special Def	Hit only by silver or +1 weapons		
Magic Res	Nil		

Description: Jahed came into Sri Raji as a young adult. At that time, he was a fine example of physical fitness blessed with strong limbs, keen senses, and a quick mind. In the years that have passed since his arrival, the rigors of life in Ravenloft have left their mark on him. His once gentle and laughing features have hardened and become cruel. His green eyes smoulder with an anger that is constantly ready to erupt into acts of physical violence. The flowing mane of copper hair that he sported as a lad has been replaced with a savagely cropped crew cut.

Jahed prefers to wear dark clothes, for they enable him to move about in the shadows and alleys without being seen. He has spent some time in the lands of Kara-tur and his garb is based loosely on that of the ninjas that he met there. He carries no weapons, for he is quite secure in his ability to defend himself.

Background: Jahed is a stranger in Sri Raji. He was born to a tribe of wandering gypsies in the Dalelands of the Forgotten Realms. His parents were skilled entertainers and not a little bit larcenous at heart. Because he knows of the tricks and sleight of hand that his people used to appear mystical and mysterious to outsiders, Jahed places no stock in stories of Vistani power. On those few occasions when he meets the gypsies of Ravenloft, he treats them with scorn and contempt.

Jahed's childhood was marked by brutality and evil. His father, Mercurio, was a cruel and prying man. He delighted in the suffering of those that they passed in their travels and, whenever it was convenient, took a hand in making such circumstances even worse. Jahed's mother, Antelucia, was timid and sickly, having been battered into submission by her abusive husband long before Jahed's birth.

As a teenager, Jahed met and fell in love with a girl named Milissa. Milissa was an elegant young lady, born into the highest ranks of society. Careful to avoid letting her know the truth about his parents and the lowly stature of his family, Jahed arranged secret rendezvouses with his sweetheart.

After a few of these meetings, Jahed suspected something amiss about his young lady. He realized that Milissa had also failed to tell him about her family. His curiosity mounted, but he was destined to have no chance to investigate Milissa's secrets.

Mercurio had noticed his son's secret departures from their camp and decided to find out what the youngster was up to. He followed Jahed's path into the heart of a thick forest and there found the embracing lovers. Furious, he charged forward and struck Jahed with his heavy walking stick. The boy spun away from Milissa and fell to his knees.

With his son too dazed to interfere, Mercurio turned his attention to Milissa. At first, he verbally abused her, demanding that she leave his son alone. Then he started to insult her, calling her a tramp and a harlot. Finally he struck her with his cane.

Much to his surprise, the girl nimbly avoided the blow and sprang at him. In mid-leap, she became a snarling tigress. Landing fully upon Mercurio, she snapped powerful jaws down on his windpipe and tore his abdomen open with her raking claws. Mercurio died before his body hit the ground.

Jahed, who had recovered sense enough to realize that some creature was attacking his father, rushed into the fray. He had no idea that the monster before him was his beloved. Drawing the slender dagger that he always carried with him, Jahed stabbed the tigress.

Milissa whirled about and ripped at the boy with her claws, wounding Jahed. He fell backwards and lost consciousness as his blood flowed onto the rich soil of the forest.

Hours later, Jahed awoke. His wounds had been tended and he was lying beside a stream that trickled under the stars of a cloudless autumn night. Nearby, he found a note from Milissa explaining that she would never see him again.

Jahed, whose life had been one of broken promises and harsh punishments, took the heart-breaking news well. The traumas of his life had left him so unfeeling that he simply forgot the girl, assuming that she had used him for a brief fling.

His wounds healed and he returned to the traveling life that he had always known. He thought no more of the girl and devoted himself to caring for his mother. With Mercurio dead, she began to brighten and take an interest in the world around her. When she died nine months later, Jahed buried her with a remorse he never felt for his father.

Three months passed and on the anniversary of Mercurio's death, a strange transformation came over Jahed. He was guiding his team of horses through a narrow pass when a band of orc raiders dropped on him. Jahed felt a savage anger well up in him as the creatures attacked and, without being fully aware of what happened, he transformed into a tiger and destroyed the orcs.

Over the course of the next several months, Jahed fought to understand the strange legacy of his first love. He came to appreciate exactly what had happened on the night his father had died and recognized Milissa's true nature

With time and effort, he learned how to control the metamorphosis, learning to become a tiger whenever he wished. He also found that he would transform every year on the day of Mercurio's death and nothing could cause him to resume his normal form save the taking of a life.

By the time Jahed entered Ravenloft, he had come to grips with the creature that possessed him. He grew to love the power that came with the shape of the beast. He continued to travel, but left behind the trappings of gypsy merchant and become something of a mercenary adventurer.

Over the years, Jahed's personality changed. His brutal side, which had been much like his father's, took on a more calculating edge. Recognizing the wild and chaotic nature of Mercurio's life, he sought to give his own a sense of order. While unable to throw off the burden of cruelty and wickedness that was his legacy, he lifted himself above the brutal sadism that was his father's trademark.

Years later, Jahed was travelling through a region of thick jungles in search of an ancient treasure said to lie hidden there. He came across a ruined temple and entered it. Inside, he found tiger mosaics, figurines, and other items that led him to believe that this place had once been sacred to others like himself.

Strangely awed by the ruins, he felt at home. Jahed decided this place was to be his from that day forth. He swore to restore it to its former glory and spend the rest of his days in this tropical land.

Little did Jahed realize the enormity of his oath, for his travels had brought him to the ethereal fringes of Ravenloft. Had he left the region promptly, he would probably have been able to escape the hungry mists of the Demiplane of Dread. Instead, he created a spiritual anchor that has burdened his soul ever since.

The first night Jahed spent in this temple, he had an unusual and terrifying dream. He found himself in the company of Ravana, the rakshasa god to whom the temple had been sacred. The god charged him with the task of hunting down and destroying Arijani. Impressed by the sheer power that engulfed this ancient god, Jahed eagerly agreed and vowed not to die until the

betrayer repaid his crime.

Shortly after he received this vision, Jahed found himself hunted by the priestesses of Kali. He escaped alive but was forced to flee into the jungles as his temple was razed.

Jahed found survival in the wilderness difficult, even for someone with his great powers. Eventually, he learned to exist both in the jungles and within the cities. For several years, he devoted himself to the creation of the Stalkers, spreading lycanthropy to a select group of natives and establishing his aura of fear around the band.

Combat: Jahed will almost always revert to his tiger form before engaging in combat. In this shape, he strikes with his deadly front claws, bites with his keen fangs, and rakes with his rending rear claws. It is hard to imagine a more deadly opponent than an angry weretiger. Jahed is immune to attacks made with weapons that are not silver or at least bearing a +1 enchantment.

When Jahed is forced to engage in combat while in his human form, he generally fights a delaying action. His tactic will be to fall back until he can buy himself the time to transform into his tiger's body.

Jahed uses his shape-shifting ability as something of an attack in itself. When fighting untrained or easily spooked individuals (that is, the average peasant or inexperienced guardsman), he makes certain that his enemy sees him transform. Such people must make a Morale check, if not a Fear or Horror check. Experienced adventurers, like the PCs, are generally immune to such shock tactics, having seen countless things of this nature in their careers. However, if they aren't expecting it or find themselves in an unusually vulnerable situation, the DM is perfectly free to impose such checks.

Jahed seldom travels anywhere without a pair of body guards. Like himself, these two will be deadly weretigers. No detailing of his combat ability would be complete without a mention that he seldom has to fight alone.

Current Sketch: Jahed has been actively attempting to force a decisive confrontation with Arijani for nearly a decade. His past skirmishes have convinced him that only the recovery of *Ravana's Bane* will make victory possible.

Jahed is confident and sullen. Victory has eluded him so many times that he is gradually sinking into despair. The arrival of the player characters has rekindled his hope that triumph might be at hand. Thus, his very sanity may hinge upon their success or failure.

Minja

1st Level Human Rogue, Lawful Good

Armor Class	7	Str	8
Movement	12	Dex	17
Level/HD	1	Con	10
Hit Points	6	Int	15
THAC0	20	Wis	16
No. Att	1	Cha	18
Dam/Att	Dagger (1d4)		
Special Att	None		
Special Def	None		
Magic Res	None		

Thieving Skills: PP 25%, OL 20%, F/R 5%, MS 40%, HS 30%, HN 15%, CW 70%, RL 0%, BS +4 attack, 2× damage

Description: Minja is a small, slender girl in her late teens. She has very pale skin and sandy-brown hair that she keeps dyed black. Her features are pleasant and unassuming. While she is quite pretty, she makes no effort to attract attention to herself or enhance her beauty. Because of this, she is often described or remembered as being a very plain and average-looking woman.

Because she is an outsider, she wears a white porcelain mask to cover her foreign features when she goes out in public. Almost everyone in Pakat knows of the existence of this masked woman, but most attribute her concealing garb to the publicly disseminated story that her face is badly scared. Because she allows none of her pale skin to show, those who meet her have no idea that she is not a native of Sri Raji.

Background: Minja's parents were merchants who travelled through the lands where the player characters make their homes. One night, a terrific storm swept across their campsite. The next morning, when they awoke from a night of fitful sleep, the storm had passed on. To their surprise, they found that they were now in a mysterious land inhabited by a strange people. They began to explore and entered the city of Muladi.

They were clearly outsiders and not welcomed by the locals. It was not long before they drew the attention of the Dark Sisters to themselves. In an effort to escape their fate, Minja's parents boarded a boat and headed down the Vedama River, hoping to escape into the mists east of the city.

Before they reached their ethereal destination, sheets of fire fell from the sky, utterly destroying their boat. Word that the outsiders had offended the gods and had been destroyed for their evil ways spread quickly throughout Muladi.

The next day, as a young man named Zind was committing the body of his deceased daughter to the depths of Lake Veda, he found a young girl clinging to a fragment of an incinerated boat. He took this as a gift from the gods to replace the child that had been taken from him. Taking the traumatized girl home, he and his wife Alissa raised her as their own.

In order to protect their adopted daughter, the couple left their lives in Muladi behind and headed west, settling in Pakat. They told people that their daughter had been attacked by a tiger and horribly mauled. The mask, they said, was simply a cover for the horrible scars that were left by the attack.

In Pakat, Zind set aside his past career as a farmer and became a craftsman. With diligence and time, Minja's father became a skilled and respected artisan whose work in ivory and jade brought him fame and a fair degree of wealth.

Combat: Minja is not a coward, but her meek demeanor makes it almost inconceivable that she will be found in combat. In any situation that lends itself toward a violent resolution, Minja will vanish. She doesn't want any part of a fight. She carries a dagger, which she might use if pressed. She thinks of it as a tool for cutting rope and the like, not as a weapon.

Current Sketch: Minja is a quiet young woman. She will answer questions for the PCs honestly and will gladly serve as their translator. She will not ask many questions about their (and her) home land. As far as she is concerned, that place means nothing to her. Sri Raji is her home and she will not be persuaded to leave it under any circumstances.

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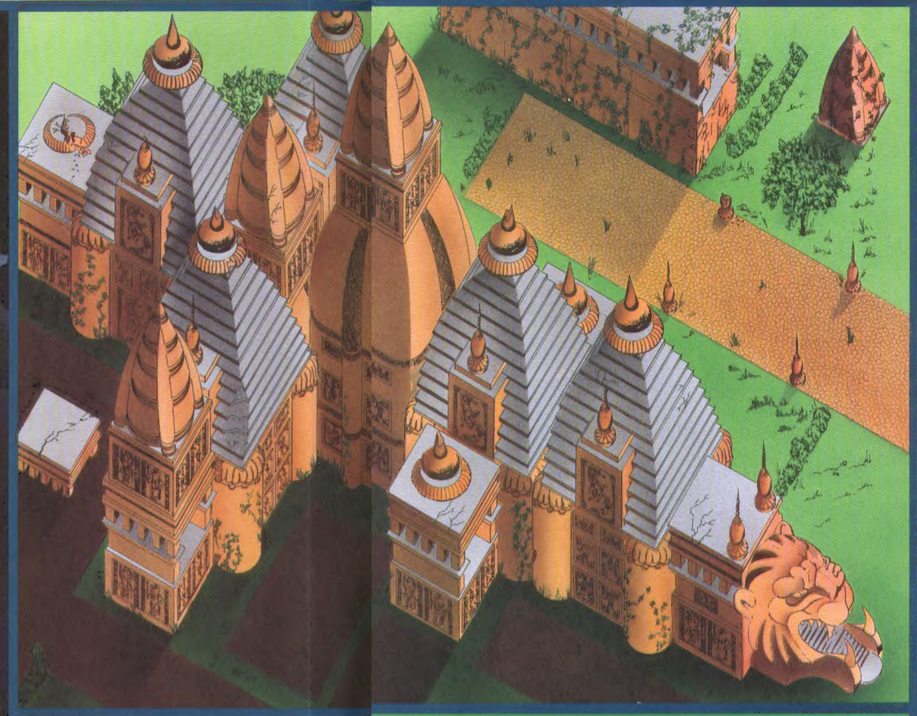

Mahakala

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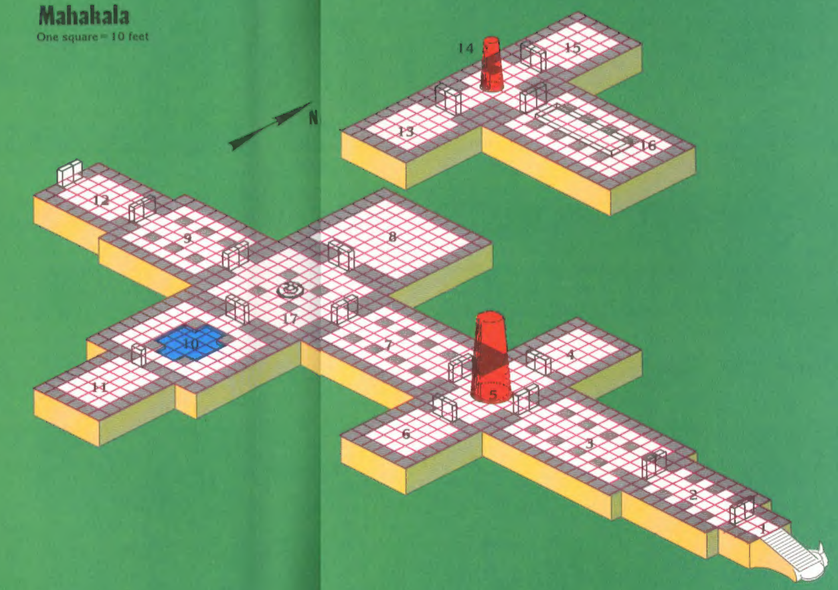

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